WEDNESDAY, 24 JULY 1996

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. N. J. Turner, Nicklin) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Mr B. Auberson

From **Mr Beanland** (23 signatories) requesting the House demand that Bradley William Auberson be retried for the murder of Janine Marie Auberson because justice has not been done.

Penalties and Sentences

From **Mr Carroll** (631 signatories) requesting the House to ensure that the perpetrators of violent crimes be sentenced to the maximum number of years allowable, and actually serve them.

Gun Control Laws

From **Mr Cooper** (over 40,000 signatories) requesting the House to (a) pass legislation that will outlaw in our society the possession of automatic or semiautomatic firearms and ammunition for the same (b) pass legislation that will outlaw in our society the use of automatic or semiautomatic firearms (c) pass legislation that will ensure that other firearms can be possessed and used only by those who have a legitimate reason for such possession or use (d) pass legislation requiring those who possess any firearm to ensure that while not in use any firearm is not armed and is stored in a safe and secure place and (e) commit itself to the proposals in the Federal Government's initiative on the restriction of firearms.

Gun Control Laws

From **Mr Cooper** (1,213 signatories) requesting the House to implement the agreement for national uniform gun laws to its fullest extent in passing new legislation without watering down the new gun control laws.

Gun Control Laws

From **Mr Gilmore** (13 petitioners) requesting the House to support the proposed new gun laws.

Gun Control Laws

From **Mr Hegarty** (12 signatories) requesting that the House stand firm behind the Howard Government in their decision to ban all semiautomatic and military style firearms.

Leichhardt and Wulkuraka Urban Renewal Development Project

From **Mr Livingstone** (453 signatories) requesting that the House give the residents of the Leichhardt area a commitment to continue the Leichhardt and Wulkuraka Urban Renewal Development Project and a commitment that the Leichhardt Community Centre be built.

Pacific Highway

From **Mr Robertson** (197 signatories) requesting the House to call on the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to (a) accept that his decision to widen the Pacific Highway will devastate whole communities along the route; (b) reconsider his decision to widen the Pacific Highway to eight lanes and not allow further widening of the highway past six lanes; and (c) investigate other alternative routes which will have a significantly lesser impact on the health, environment and properties of existing residential communities.

Traffic Lights, Gordonvale

From **Mrs Wilson** (1,253 signatories) requesting the House to immediately install traffic lights on the intersection of Bruce Highway and Riverstone Road Gordonvale.

Petitions received.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Overseas Visit

Hon. R. E. BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Premier) (9.34 a.m.), by leave: I take this opportunity to advise the Parliament of the success of initiatives commenced during my recent visit to Indonesia. Already from that visit we have seen encouraging signs for increased trade between our two countries. In Indonesia I had the opportunity to meet with senior Government representatives of several Asian countries, in particular the Peoples Republic of China.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much noise on both sides of the Chamber.

Mr BORBIDGE: I also took the opportunity to initiate talks with Australian embassy officials and the Indonesian Government about the prospects of improving air services between Queensland and Indonesia. I am pleased to report that this week Qantas announced that as part of its northern winter scheduling it plans to introduce a service on Wednesdays and Saturdays from Brisbane to Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur. I am advised that this service will begin on 16 November this year. This is part of what Qantas describes as an unparalleled range of flights to key Asian destinations. The new services represent the airline's first non-stop flights linking Brisbane with Jakarta and ensure that the most convenient flights are available between these two countries. This decision, strongly argued for by the Queensland Government, is good news for our State and will serve to further open up this State to more of Asia and its emerging markets.

Mr Davidson interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: My colleague the Minister for Tourism also advises me of the plans to expand the activities of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation into Jakarta—something that was ignored by the previous Government.

Qantas is now providing 37 flights to Asia from Queensland each week. These include 19 non-stop flights from Brisbane and another 18 flights from Cairns. These flights are helping us to fly the flag of Queensland into all destinations of the Asia Pacific. On behalf of the Government, I congratulate them on this initiative. This Government is serious about increasing this State's profile in the Asia Pacific. As a further result of my recent visit to Indonesia, our Government has received a formal invitation from the Government of Indonesia to participate in high-level Government and industry discussions.

An Opposition member: High level!

Mr BORBIDGE: It came from Minister Hartarto. If the honourable member knows anything about Indonesia, he would know how significant that Minister is to Australia, Indonesia and the Asia Pacific. I can confirm that the Minister for Economic Development and Trade and the Minister for Primary Industries will accompany a delegation of Queensland business leaders for these discussions. This is a further sign of the close trade links being forged by the coalition Government and Indonesia.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Seniors Week

Hon. K. R. LINGARD (Beaudesert—Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care) (9.37 a.m.), by leave: As members may be aware, this week, Seniors Week, is an important annual event on the Queensland calender, and the State Government is pleased to give it full support. The week focuses on and promotes issues pertinent to older people in our community, and gives an opportunity for the entire community to become involved. Seniors Week fulfils the need to promote a more positive understanding of ageing. It promotes the achievements of older people and the valuable role they play in the community. The week also offers an opportunity for older people to break down the isolation that they sometimes feel, to broaden their horizons and experience new recreational and social activities.

To this end, the Queensland Government has funded Seniors Week activities this year and has enabled some 400 events across 100 Queensland cities and towns. The Queensland branch of the Australian Pensioners and Superannuants League has played a pivotal role in developing, coordinating and promoting the various events Statewide. The involvement of various State Government departments and agencies in Seniors Week is also central to its success.

The Office of Ageing within my department has produced a special edition newsletter this year which outlines and updates Queensland's forward plan on ageing. The forward plan is the result of extensive and ongoing consultation with older people and their organisations, service providers and Government agencies. It deals with a range of initiatives being implemented by the Queensland Government through its department and agencies. Other Seniors Week initiatives include—

- the Department of Transport's $23m Passenger Safety Program;
- self-defence courses conducted by the Police Service to improve the personal safety of older Queenslanders;
- the production of a number of brochures and a report by the Queensland Health Promotion Council to promote healthy lifestyles for older people;
- a 10-week course from the Older Women's Network covering the social and physical aspects of ageing; and

- the launch of the Safe and Confident Living Project, designed to respond to crime and safety issues for older people.

The State Government has this week also launched the 1996-97 Statewide Seniors Card Directory and a brand new initiative, the Seniors Business Discounts Card. This year the directory contains a record number of discounts for cardholders, with almost 300 businesses and 1,000 outlets listed. New entries include veterinary surgeons, retirement villages and shopping centres. More importantly, more Queenslanders than ever before will be able to benefit from the savings listed in the directory.

The new Seniors Business Discounts Card provides over 60s who are self-funded in retirement access to business discounts at 1,000 business outlets in Queensland, and thousands more around Australia when they travel interstate. It is expected that this new scheme will assist up to 60,000 additional older Queenslanders to save money through the discounted buying power provided by the new scheme. I commend the new businesses which are taking part in the Business Discounts Program and urge seniors to join this new scheme and to use the business discount card to their advantage.

To conclude—I am also pleased to advise the House that I will be making further announcements regarding Seniors Card entitlements as part of the State Government's Budget initiatives.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Mental Health Services

Hon. M. J. HORAN (Toowoomba South—Minister for Health) (9.41 a.m.), by leave: Mental health services have been the subject of much community concern in recent years. This is evidenced by a number of national reports such as the Burdekin report of 1993 and the Hoult report of 1994 and State reports such as the Carter inquiry into Ward 10B in 1991. Further, the national mental health reports released annually under the National Mental Health Strategy have been highly critical of the organisation and funding of mental health services in Queensland.

Queensland Health released minimum service standards in October 1993 in response to recommendations from the Carter inquiry into Townsville General Hospital Ward 10B in 1991, the Public Sector Management Commission, the National Mental Health Policy and Plan and Schedule F of the Medicare Agreement, which was endorsed in February 1993, and the Health Services Act 1991. Implementation of and compliance with the minimum service standards were audited in all 75 mental health services in Queensland through an external consultancy between December 1995 and January 1996. The work of the external audit team was overseen by a reference group consisting of experienced mental health managers, clinicians, consumers and carers. The findings and recommendations are detailed in a four-volume report titled "Queensland Mental Health Minimum Service Standards—Evaluation of Standard Implementation", which was finalised in March 1996. The report is now to be released.

While demonstrating that some services are performing well, the key findings are that: at a State level the mental health system fails to meet full compliance with the minimum standards; no service fully met all the minimum standards; and of the 75 service sites audited, 20 rated poor or nil compliance. It is important to point out that failure to meet these minimum standards is not an indication of poor clinical care being offered by mental health staff in Queensland. Rather, it is a reflection of an inadequate system which has failed to support staff in the delivery of quality mental health services for the people of Queensland. The report highlights the need for immediate action to address demonstrated problems with mental health services in Queensland, especially as they relate to: service organisation and management; leakage of mental health budgets; deficiency in resources in some areas; paucity of mental health data collection systems; and problems with the medical record system.

Despite commitments given by the previous Labor Government to improve mental health, the inability to address structural inadequacies in the system has clearly hampered the implementation of the minimum standards. Mental health resourcing has been inadequate and, in recent years, has fallen in per capita terms. Despite mental health being a so-called priority, in the two years to 1994-95 Queensland mental health expenditure increased by less than 5 per cent, while in the same period the Queensland Health budget increased by 13.4 per cent.

A comprehensive action plan to address the deficiencies in the audit is being implemented by the coalition Government. This will include action at local service, district and Statewide levels. The main thrust of this action includes—

Immediate action by district managers and district directors of mental health services to implement the recommendations of the audit.

An identifiable 10-year plan for mental health for Queensland has been developed and will shortly be submitted to Cabinet. This will allow a specific focus to be given to mental health within Queensland Health.

The mental health program budget has now been quarantined under the coalition Government. This will enable the allocation of resources to priority areas and the transfer of resources from one district health service to another.

Appropriate cost centre accounting and reporting through a specific schedule of the Queensland Government Financial Management System to allow monitoring of mental health expenditure.

As well as the immediate action, the performance agreements between corporate office and health districts will continue the focus on the implementation of the report recommendations and improvement in implementing the standards.

Organisational structures at district level are being introduced to support improvements in mental health. This will include the deployment of a single accountable officer for all mental health services within the district.

A Mental Health Service Standards Quality Award will be made to those 11 services and two districts identified in the report as demonstrating excellence in some aspects of standards.

The previous Labor Government must be condemned for its gross mismanagement of mental health services in this State. It is scandalous that after two years none of Queensland's mental health services fully attained an agreed set of minimum standards. The coalition Government has made mental health a priority issue. Unlike the previous Labor Government, we are giving more than just lip-service to improving mental health. We are providing the leadership, direction and resources to ensure that mental health services in Queensland improve dramatically.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Wet Tropics Management Authority

Hon. B. G. LITTLEPROUD (Western Downs—Minister for Environment) (9.46 a.m.), by leave: Recently there has been considerable debate through the media regarding appointments to the board of the Wet Tropics Management Authority. Most of this debate has been instigated by the Labor network and has amounted to an attempt to denigrate one person. The board comprises a chairman, who is appointed by mutual agreement of the Commonwealth and State Governments, two representatives each appointed by the State and Commonwealth Ministers for Environment, and the executive director. The current chairman, Mr Geoff Donaghy, has advised his intention to resign, as has another State representative, Councillor Tom Pyne, the Mayor of Cairns. The other State representative is the failed former Labor member for Barron River, Dr Lesley Clark, and the Commonwealth representatives are Dr Aila Keto and Mr Noel Pearson.

I have had discussions with my Commonwealth counterpart regarding the position of chairman. Names discussed have included the Mayor of Atherton, Councillor Jim Chapman, a highly regarded person in far-north Queensland among local authorities as well as the general community. Another whose name has been mentioned in the media is that of a well-known fundraising consultant, Mr Everald Compton, who has made representations to both myself and Senator Hill offering himself for the position.

The regard for Councillor Chapman was demonstrated this week in a report in the *Cairns Post* on a meeting of the Cairns City Council. The report was headlined "Councillors back Wet tropics bid", and the introduction reads—

> "Cairns City Councillors yesterday threw their weight behind the push to have Atherton Mayor Jim Chapman appointed Wet Tropics Management Authority board chairman.
>
> Councillor Jan McLucas"—

of the Cairns City Council—

> "moved to have the council oppose the possible appointment of Councillor Chapman as board chairman, but the motion was overwhelmingly rejected."

It is worthy of note that Councillor McLucas' husband is the member for Cook, Mr Steve Bredhauer, who just happens to be a Labor comrade of the former failed member for Barron River, Dr Lesley Clark. Another of their comrades, the Federal Labor spokesperson for Environment, Dr Carmen Lawrence, spoke out last week against Mr Chapman, alleging that his appointment would be cronyism. Dr

Lawrence, of WA Inc infamy, is of course renowned for her poor memory. In this case, she conveniently forgot that the former State Labor Government appointed Dr Clark after she lost her seat. I would prefer not to comment on Dr Clark as a board member, but she has also been publicly involved in the campaign against Councillor Chapman.

Isn't it just too obvious? This bevy of Labor hacks is conducting a deliberate campaign to denigrate the reputation of a highly regarded citizen because they see their monopolistic hold on management of the Wet Tropics Management Authority under threat. The plot extended to another level. Recently another Wet Tropics board member, Dr Keto, accompanied by a Queensland Conservation Council representative, came to see me. Dr Keto also raised the matter of Councillor Chapman, and her comments were remarkably similar to those of Councillor McLucas, as reported in the *Cairns Post*. Both have similar views about the type of person the chairman should be. Councillor Mc Lucas was quoted as saying—

> "To be the chair you have to either be an independent person—and a person appropriate for that job is an academic or someone held in high regard by the whole community—or a stakeholder who has the support of all the other players in the game."

Councillor Chapman is certainly held in high regard by the community. Even Councillor McLucas put politics aside and said that she recognised his record——

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cook! I understand that the member would possibly like to stay here for question time. He will try to curtail his natural exuberance.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I reiterate: even Councillor McLucas put politics aside and said that she recognised his record, contributions and skills. She also supported him becoming a board member. The majority of Cairns city councillors spoke in support of Councillor Chapman. Some were critical of what they saw as a shameful personal attack against the man. Councillor Pyne said that there was a need for a representative of local government on the board, and Councillor Chapman represented local government organisations and was a resident of the area.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: He loves Mr Mackenroth. He has had plenty of run-ins with him.

Mr Borbidge: Is that Labor stalwart Tom Pyne?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I have some regard for Mr Pyne. He offered his resignation to me because he said he has too many other things on his plate. However, he recognised that we need a man from local government on the board.

Councillor Chapman was part of a State Government delegation which went to Brazil in 1988 to oppose World Heritage listing of the Wet Tropics. He represented local governments and communities of the area who had legitimate concerns about World Heritage listing—concerns not so much about the listing as about the boundaries and the effects that the listing would have on local industries and communities. Those are legitimate concerns.

It is scandalous for the ALP, so prepossessed with trying to retain control of the Wet Tropics Management Authority, to so publicly vilify a very worthy citizen—a person who not only serves as mayor of a major north Queensland council but also chairs the Far North Organisation of Councils as well as the North Queensland Local Government Association. I can assure these Labor hacks that the public is fully aware of their grubby tricks, and they serve only to strengthen my resolve to have an authority board that properly represents the interests of all of the people in north Queensland.

In conclusion, Senator Hill and I are in agreement that the Wet Tropics Management Plan, which has been under development for some years, needs to be finalised as a matter of priority to remove uncertainty and to set a clear course for the future of this important area of Australian and world heritage.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Timber Industry

Hon. T. J. PERRETT (Barambah—Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: This Government appreciates the vital economic role that forests play, contributing over $1.4 billion to our economy each year. We appreciate the economic and social benefits flowing from the 338 timber mills, panel board and paper mills in Queensland, not to mention the hundreds of secondary processing industries. Unlike Labor, we value the 15,000 jobs that forests generate, particularly since most of these jobs are outside Brisbane. That is why I reject the statement in this place two weeks ago that I was hawking our native

forests behind the back of the Queensland Timber Board. The shadow Minister who made the allegation has not replied to letters from the Timber Board since he has been in Opposition or communicated with them in any way, so how would he know what the Timber Board thinks about any particular issue? The Forest Working Group, which he criticised, is working very effectively under this Government, with a broadened membership to properly balance the needs of industry and the interests of conservation groups.

The member also seemed confused about the forest interim management arrangements which flowed out of a grubby deal that his Government did with the conservationists on the eve of the 15 July election last year. The interim management arrangements were scrapped because they were not based on scientific fact and did not follow due process. I also point out that I did not give approval for Dr Gary Bacon, the Executive Director of Forestry, to "make clandestine visits to timber mills, offering up logging areas currently protected by the interim management arrangements". Dr Gary Bacon is a highly respected forest manager and scientist. He is an ardent supporter of the timber industry and his family has a long and proud association with the industry.

That the professionalism, integrity and motives of my most senior Forestry public servant should even be questioned is an absolute disgrace. I have given Dr Bacon specifically, and DPI Forestry in general, the role of industry advocates, which is a legitimate and necessary role in achieving an internationally competitive industry. Dr Bacon has every right to provide scientific factual balance to the highly emotive lies peddled by some conservationists. I strongly support his letter to the editor of the *Courier-Mail* last week to correct the green deception that Government plans to woodchip native forests.

The shadow Environment Minister, who criticised Dr Bacon in a letter to the editor of Saturday's *Courier-Mail*, should be ashamed of his disgraceful attack on a highly respected public servant diligently doing his job. He should also check his facts before he opens his mouth. This Government, along with the Timber Board, supports the chipping of waste from current sawmill and logging operations, currently burnt or left to rot, adding to greenhouse emissions. Along with the Queensland Timber Board, this Government does not support the cutting down of native forests for woodchip.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tree-clearing Guidelines

Hon. H. W. T. HOBBS (Warrego—Minister for Natural Resources) (9.56 a.m.), by leave: Today I wish to inject some reality and accuracy into the tree-clearing debate.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr HOBBS: The honourable member should listen. He might learn something.

Lately, the conservation movement has again raised the heat against tree clearing in its usual unproductive way by making outlandish claims about the areas of land being cleared. Recent new satellite data has shown that previous land-clearing estimates were wildly inaccurate and exaggerated far beyond reality. But only last weekend I heard the Tasmanian Green Bob Brown using the now totally discredited figure that Queensland was clearing land at more than 500,000 hectares a year.

A Government member: An outrageous claim.

Mr HOBBS: Outrageous—that is right. Frankly, by now he should know better, especially if he wants to retain credibility as a senator in Federal Parliament, where he will be found wanting if he makes unsubstantiated claims.

Mr Welford: How do you know?

Mr HOBBS: I ask the member to wait and listen.

However, Mr Brown's 500,000 hectares is a play-school figure—if one listens to the Queensland Conservation Council. Lately this body of conservationists has sounded a bit like David Campese when he opens his mouth—there is a communications disaster. The *Queensland Country Life* of 11 July quotes QCC project officer Frances Herbert as claiming that the council has never made claims that a million hectares were being cleared annually. Obviously that was not good enough for others inside the QCC, because the *Courier-Mail* of Monday this week quoted the council coordinator, Imogen Zethoven, as saying that the Natural Resources Department issued permits in one 14-month period, allowing 1.04 million hectares of the State's leasehold land to be cleared. She also claimed that "huge tracts of land" are being cleared despite State Government efforts to slow down the bulldozer and that a further million hectares might be approved in the next year.

Another part of the scare campaign is a so-called environmental report that predicts that much of south-east Queensland will be laid bare if tree clearing continues at its current rate. Unfortunately, this type of confusion and overblown publicity does little for sensible and rational debate on the issue.

The Queensland Government's overall aim is to introduce sound tree-clearing guidelines based on accurate scientific data, economic impact and practicality. For the good of Queensland we do not need a debate sidetracked by a combination of fiction and exaggeration. What we do need is some flexibility, a degree of give and take and, above all, a genuine willingness to achieve mutually agreed, workable, new guidelines. I doubt that we will ever be able to make the Greens entirely happy, but they must understand that we are doing whatever we can to comply with their requests, and we are willing to work with them. However, at the end of the day there must be a consensus, decisions based on accurate data, and a willingness to give a little if the other side does. If the Greens base their information and negotiations on accurate data and properly based arguments, they will find us willing to listen. But if we think they are wrong, we will not hesitate to say so.

The facts are that nowhere near 500,000 hectares a year were cleared over the past few years—as put forward by the previous Government and conservationists. Needless to say, the former Labor Government's wildly inaccurate estimates will not be used as a basis for revised tree-clearing guidelines. Recent new satellite data put the overall land clearance at 308,000 hectares a year, or only 0.18 per cent of the total area of the State. I know that this might still sound like too much for some people, but in terms of total vegetation, these figures take no account of regrowth or general increase in density, for example, in mulga country. Another big factor is that due to the drought and the current depressed State of primary industries, particularly beef and wool, very little new timber pulling is being undertaken. The satellite imagery shows that a lot of land clearing that it was claimed was being done had not, in fact, occurred and the previous information was flawed.

Another false impression is given by using the number of permits issued as the source of determining how many hectares are being cleared. What actually occurs is that some permits have never been activated to date and may never be used. A combination of satellite and ground mapping by both the Departments of Environment and Natural Resources has shown that clearing of gidgee communities in central and western Queensland has been significantly overestimated. Ecologists in the Environment Department now consider that the remaining gidgee communities are not under threat of overclearing, nor are they in danger of becoming endangered or vulnerable. For gidgee alone more than 400,000 hectares in the Longreach-Aramac-Blackall area remains uncleared.

Other revealing figures are that 69 per cent of the clearing is regrowth, which shows that of the average 308,000 hectares a year cleared, only 100,000 is virgin timber or 0.06 per cent of the total area of the State. This new information opens the way for industry and other stakeholders to finalise local tree-clearing guidelines throughout the State. Permits issued over the last two years covered 1.2 million hectares, or 0.7 per cent of the State, but, as stated previously, a lot of this land is not actually being cleared and may never be cleared.

Development of gidgee and other acacia scrubs had been a contentious issue which could not be resolved until the mapping program began providing answers on the extent of these communities. I urge industry and other stakeholders to maintain the impetus of their efforts so far to complete the task of finalising the new guidelines. I encourage groups to see the value in getting guidelines into place so that land-holders know where they stand on land development. A review of guidelines will occur next year as more data becomes available.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Motorway Newsletter

Hon. V. G. JOHNSON (Gregory—Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: This morning I table a copy of the newsletter delivered by Queensland Transport to homes along the corridor of the south-east motorway. Properties within 300 metres either side of the motorway are considered to be potentially directly affected by the eight-lane upgrade. More than 13,000 newsletters have been delivered as one small part of keeping the public well informed. Capalaba-based business, Reliable Leaflet Advertising, has conducted spot checks to confirm that the target area was reached. I have personally met with a number of resident groups, including Citizens Against Freeway Expansion. Whether it is through face-to-face meetings, local media or

newsletters, we will keep people informed and listen carefully to all constructive comments. Many suggestions from the public have already been incorporated in the planning for the south-east motorway.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Lytton By-election

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.03 a.m.): I give notice that I shall move—

> "That the House calls on the Premier to explain his refusal to announce a by-election date for the electorate of Lytton, almost eight weeks after the resignation of the former Member, Tom Burns; and
>
> That the House condemns the Premier for his recent public statement that the by-election date will only be announced when it suits the Government, despite the fact that the voters of Lytton continue to be unrepresented in this place due to his inaction."

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Lytton By-election

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—Leader of the Opposition) (10.04 a.m.): Mr Speaker——

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I seek leave to start my time again. The Premier is interfering in a way that makes it difficult for me to——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There have been interjections from both sides of the Chamber.

Mr BEATTIE: It is an absolute disgrace that almost eight weeks ago the member for Lytton tendered his resignation from this Parliament to take effect from midnight on Friday, 31 May, and what do we have? We have an inexcusable situation in which the Premier is not prepared to announce the by-election date. Presumably, his party is not even contesting it. It will be a Liberal Party candidate who is contesting, but still the Premier runs scared and is not prepared to have any regard for the people of Lytton having a voice in this Parliament. The foundation of our democracy is that people are entitled to be represented, yet almost eight weeks have passed and the people of Lytton do not have a representative in this Parliament.

There has been sufficient time for a by-election to be held and for the people of Lytton to be represented in this House. It is not good enough for the people of Lytton to be ignored and treated in a cavalier way by the Premier. The fact is that a Budget will soon be brought down. This Government is talking about sin taxes, petrol taxes—major changes to the economy of this State—and the people of Lytton will not have a say in it because the Premier is too scared to call a by-election. What does he say? He says that the election will be called at the convenience of the Government. What about the people of Lytton? What about the people who are entitled to a voice in this Parliament?

What do we have? This Saturday we have a cocktail party, which the Premier and the Deputy Premier will attend, the so-called dream team—"dreamy" team would be more like it! Cocktail parties are no substitute for the ballot box. The ballot box is what is important in this case, and it is about time the Premier set the date for the by-election.

Mr A. Callaghan

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga) (10.06 a.m.): The appointment of Allen Callaghan to the State Library Board has raised serious questions about the competence and lawfulness of Arts Minister Sheldon's advice to the Governor in Council recommending the appointment. Mr Callaghan's resignation does not detract from the ministerial responsibility for his appointment in the first place. The law provides in the Libraries and Archives Act that a conviction for an indictable offence is a circumstance of disqualification. That can only be set to one side where there is a positive exercise of a discretion on the part of the Minister.

The question is: did the Minister inform the Governor in Council of Mr Callaghan's circumstance of disqualification and the exercise of a discretion or did the Minister conceal that fact from the Governor when she made the recommendation to the Governor in Council? The Arts Minister has been evasive on this question. In response to a question in Parliament from the member for Capalaba, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Arts Minister evaded answering the question. When she tabled her own legal advice in the Parliament, the advice disclosed that she had not even revealed to her own legal adviser what factors, if any, were taken into account in the exercise of her discretion. So she has evaded it with her own legal adviser.

I call on the Arts Minister, Mrs Sheldon, to table the documents in Parliament outlining

her advice to the Governor in Council regarding the appointment of Allen Callaghan. Mrs Sheldon has to come clean on this issue. Did she reveal to the Governor in Council in making that recommendation the circumstances of the disqualification and the reasons why she exercised such a discretion, notwithstanding the failure of Callaghan to have repaid the sum that was misappropriated from the taxpayers of Queensland?

Time expired.

Children in Cairns

Mrs WILSON (Mulgrave) (10.08 a.m.): During the last parliamentary session, I alluded to the plight of the Cairns young people and the work of the Street Level Youth Care and Indinje who deal on a daily basis and also at night with young children of the Cairns/Mulgrave area. Young boys and girls with an age range between 3 and 15 years are in the streets late at night, many of them with their parents' blessing. Gordonvale experienced vandalism by those louts only two weeks ago; yet they got away with it. The police and the Cairns City Council have tried to assist in this matter. Last session, a member from the opposite side of the Chamber interjected with a call asking what the Government was doing about those young people, many of whom turn to crime in the early hours of the morning. In the limited time available, I did not respond. However, this Government has promised increased police numbers. Gordonvale saw two new police being posted last week.

The amendments to the juvenile justice legislation will go some way to addressing the problem. The amendments include ensuring that the courts and police are given adequate and appropriate powers. Community conferencing between perpetrators and victims has proved successful in New Zealand. Placing an onus of responsibility on parents is very important. I recognise that some of the parents have genuine problems with dysfunction with their assistance. However, I do not believe that abrogating one's responsibility to young children by adults is responsible. I alluded to that previously. The provision of an alternative means of fingerprinting and palm printing of children without processing through the criminal justice system is also a step ahead. The transfer of responsibility for detention centres to the Queensland Corrective Services Commission——

Mr WELFORD: I rise to a point of order. The member is addressing a matter that relates to a Bill before the House. She should not be raising that matter in this debate. The member is out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: The member is out of order.

Mrs WILSON: I withdraw that. I commend the work that the Government is doing to address the problem of young children in the streets, and the community is certainly looking forward to a process by which their concerns can be taken up by this Government.

Time expired.

Rail Safety Audit

Hon. J. P. ELDER (Capalaba—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.10 a.m.): Two weeks ago the Minister for Transport tabled in this House a rail safety audit for Queensland Rail. In tabling the detailed report, he made comments which may have left some members with a false impression that it was an audit report—sounds familiar, does it not; audit report? The Minister tried to score political points by asserting that the previous Government had allowed Queensland's 7,000 kilometres of freight lines to deteriorate. He implied ridiculously that the deterioration had occurred under the Labor Government and that there was not chronic neglect during the 32 years that the National Party was in power in this State. The Minister read two quotes. Firstly, he referred to statements made by the author of this report, Mr Kevin Band. He stated—

> "Mr Band found that track conditions were maintained at constant levels in the 1980s and early 1990s when improvements were made, but they were never ongoing."

I now read what Mr Band actually stated in the report. He stated—

> "Track condition was maintained at constant levels during the 1980s and early 1990s, since when improvements have been made. By 1995-96 the line condition is the best result ever recorded."

The Minister, by omitting the word "since" and the entire last sentence, fundamentally changed the meaning of what Mr Band had stated. In doing so, whether deliberately or not, within the context of this audit report, the Minister misled this House. The Minister missed out the most important element of that particular conclusion. In fact, rather than condemning the Labor Government, the report goes on to commend it for the work that

it did in terms of upgrading the rail system, record moneys spent on infrastructure and record moneys spent on maintenance.

At the end of the day—and I will quote those words again—the track condition was the best ever recorded in the history of this State. The Minister deliberately misled this House and he deliberately misled the people of Queensland.

Time expired.

Lytton By-election

Mr CARROLL (Mansfield) (10.12 a.m.): I rise to condemn the Labor Party's cynical advertising campaign, which appears today in the local newspaper for the Lytton electorate. The Labor candidate in that electorate has no reputation on which to run and so purports to make an issue of a pretentious claim about the Liberal candidate, Jenny Mansell, in that electorate.

Tom Burns resigned and left that electorate unrepresented. The Liberal Party has a candidate for the Lytton electorate in Jenny Mansell, who will make an excellent representative for the people of Lytton.

An Opposition member: Well, go to the election.

Mr CARROLL: The date set for the election is at the discretion of the Government. There is a need to let the people of Lytton carefully analyse the merits of those two candidates. The claim by Mr Elder in today's paper that the people of the electorate of Lytton will be subjected to a number of marginal candidates and his veiled suggestion that the Liberal Party might be backing any of those candidates is absolute rubbish.

The people of Lytton are already grimacing under the prospect of being subjected to a Mundingburra-style media event provoked by the Labor Party. The people of Lytton do not need the gratuitous advice of Mr Elder. They know that the hollow cynicism of the Labor Party's big-spending campaign will mean nothing for them. Over the last couple of years, they have had no representation to speak of. It is time to let the people of Lytton vote for a candidate who is a local person, who is well known, and who will look after them. Neither do they want any more Labor lawyers. The Labor Party's candidate for the Lytton electorate will not represent the electorate as well as the Liberal candidate, Jenny Mansell. We only need to look at the performance of Mr Cumming to see how the people of that area have been represented by a Labor lawyer. Labor lawyers cannot compare with Jenny Mansell as the Liberal candidate.

Time expired.

Education

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (10.14 a.m.): While the Premier and Deputy Premier are extravagantly lashing out with taxpayers' money on the State bank deal, which could cost Queensland up to $700m, the education of Queensland's children is being affected. A recent article in the *Australian Financial Review* referred to the bank deal as the Banana Bank, which the media seems to have caught on to, and has referred to the Premier and Deputy Premier as B1 and B2. As B1 and B2 are running around and gambling taxpayers' dollars on the State bank, the Minister for Education is admitting that the Education budget is in for a very tough time and acknowledging that up to $100m is likely to be cut from it.

Members should remember that Mrs Sheldon promised that this bank deal would not cost Queensland taxpayers a cent. The real cost of this Government's move into banking includes the $80m it has splurged already on the share market to buy Metway shares. There has also been two lots of direct mail to 22,000 ordinary shareholders from the Treasurer, the total cost of which was over $50,000. Phone polls of 22,000 shareholders have been conducted by a Sydney-based telemarketing firm at $5 a call, the total cost of which was $110,000. So on top of that $80m splurge, $106,000 of taxpayers' money has been expended on doing the Government's bidding in commercial transactions.

While that is happening, the Education Minister is admitting that the Education budget is in real strife. Mrs Sheldon runs around spending millions of loose change in buying a bank and the Education Minister is saying that up to 2,000 teachers could lose their jobs. That is what $100m amounts to—2,000 teachers losing their jobs or 200 small schools closing. That is a measure of how low the education services rate in this coalition's priorities. There has been plenty of rhetoric by this Government but no genuine commitments to education.

Time expired.

Water Infrastructure

Mr MITCHELL (Charters Towers) (10.16 a.m.): Queensland is Australia's fastest-developing State with industry, interstate

migration and tourism growth the major contributing factors. Queensland, particularly north Queensland, has enormous development potential. However, the realisation of north Queensland's potential requires immediate improvements in the existing water and power supplies. The Burdekin River, one of the largest river systems in Queensland, has the potential to resource both of those requirements. In a study conducted by the Department of Primary Industries and water resources, 13 potential sites were identified as being suitable for water storage infrastructure. The Hells Gates site, situated a few kilometres upstream of the joining of the Running River and the Burdekin River about 200 kilometres north of Charters Towers was considered one of the better options owing to its large storage capacity and high annual reliability. The storage volume of the Hells Gates site is 5.72 million megalitres.

The advantages of developing a water supply in the upper Burdekin are boundless. For example, the research of the Queensland Department of Primary Industries has revealed that there is potential for sufficient expansion of agricultural land in the Burdekin region, particularly in irrigated cropping, where peanuts, potatoes, olives, sorghum, maize and citrus are suitable for the region's soils. An extra 60,000 hectares may be suitable for irrigated cropping.

The extended mining industry in the region would be more secure with a more permanent water supply. The Hells Gates dam would also provide opportunities for communities such as Charters Towers to attain and sustain economic development. It would also simultaneously provide increased water supply to the Burdekin Dam, which services the Burdekin irrigation scheme, and extra water for Townsville.

Most of Queensland power is generated in central and southern Queensland. There is no base load generating capacity north of Rockhampton, the result being an extensive transmission network with additional costs for power in the north and transmission losses of somewhere in the vicinity of 15 per cent to 20 per cent.

Time expired.

Health

Mrs EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha) (10.18 a.m.): After five months of inaction by the Minister for Health, the only thing that we have seen is broken promises for north Queensland health services, doctors resigning and bungled senior appointments. The self-titled "Mr Fixit" of Health Ministers is truly turning back the clock in Queensland's public hospitals system with all the rhetoric about service and delivery but no action.

Mr Horan said that there would not be problems with surgery cancellations in our public hospitals under his management. I have had a number of complaints of cancellations just from Townsville alone, and one Townsville resident discovered that not one or two cancellations is enough for this Minister; he has had his surgery cancelled four times. He has it booked for the fifth time and he has his fingers crossed. Rather than improve service delivery, the availability of doctors needed to perform elective surgery on patients at the Townsville general hospital seems to be less than satisfactory under Mr Horan's revival of the old hospital-based health council regime. However, I thought that the personal suffering of a patient in Townsville—"Mr G", I will call him—might spur "Mr Fixit" into action. Mr G hopes that making his experience public will improve services for others who will need surgery in Townsville.

Mr G wrote to his local member, Mr Tanti, but with no luck. It was the same story as the surgery: no response. Mr G then thought that he would write to the Premier's representative in Townsville, Mr Stoneman, the Parliamentary Secretary who gets umpteen thousand extra for doing that job. Mr G wanted to try to elicit some explanation as to why his surgery was continually delayed. He got a one-line response: "I will ask the Minister."

Throughout May, cancellations and rebookings occurred on an almost weekly basis and Mr G did not even get an apology or an excuse for the first three cancellations. The fourth cancellation came after he had been admitted to hospital on 21 June at 6.45 a.m., having fasted from midnight before. At 2 p.m. the nurses were so concerned about the danger of dehydration, they put him on a drip.

Time expired.

Timber Industry

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (10.21 a.m.): I take this opportunity to highlight the Government's appreciation of the vital role that the timber industry plays in the economy of this State. Timber millers pay $42m a year in royalties for the purchase of timber from Crown land.

Mr Purcell interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: One thing that Opposition members do not appreciate is that,

in talking about timber, we are talking about a renewable resource as opposed to, for example, a mining operation which finishes up with a hole in the ground. Timber has a continuity that goes on forever. There are 290 hardwood, cypress and pine saw mills in the State and their production should be able to go on and on. There are 15,000 jobs in the wood and wood products sector, which, again, is an area that we sometimes underestimate.

The only real problem within the industry is that it is only 60 per cent self-sufficient. We are buying an enormous amount of timber from overseas, which should not be allowed to continue. The countries that we import from cannot afford to send their timber away. We should be doing a lot more to encourage forestry programs among primary producers as well as within the timber and forestry industries to promote the management of our native forests in such a way that will enable them to continue to produce into the future.

Time expired.

Bowen State High School

Mrs BIRD (Whitsunday) (10.23 a.m.): On 9 July during the Appropriation Bill debate the member for Burdekin was critical of me and, in particular, of my representations for a second recreation hall on behalf of the Bowen State High School. He said—

> "I am referring to the community facility at the high school. That was promised by the Federal Government and taken up by the then Treasurer. But when we had a look at it and talked to the department people we found that there was never any money coming from the Commonwealth and it was never a line item in the Budget."

He went on to say—

> "Those people in Bowen will talk long and loudly about how they were done wrong."

Indeed, after reading the member's speech, the president of the P & C, Robert Anderson, has confirmed that the comments made by the member for Burdekin are totally untrue. Not at any time has the Bowen State High School applied for or been promised any funding by the Federal Government for the second hall. Mr Anderson also advised that he had met with the member for Burdekin four to six weeks ago and the member reaffirmed a commitment made to me by the Minister for Education for a State Government subsidy of $50,000. That is exactly $20,000 less than that offered by the Goss Government. In his letter to me the Minister said—

> "I am sure you will appreciate that governments have limited resources and that no scheme, including the Department of Education's School Improvement Assistance Scheme, can provide unlimited funding."

The program was also referred to the Community Recreation Centres Program. In a letter to the principal of Bowen State High School, the chairman of that program stated—

> "I shall forward your submission to the incoming Minister, but of course at this time, I have no idea what changes the new Government will make.
>
> . . .
>
> The submission which I have perused is an excellent one, and hopefully it will receive favourable consideration if the scheme proceeds."

I ask the Government: what is it going to do about it? It is over to the Government.

Flinders Day Celebration

Mr HEGARTY (Redlands) (10.25 a.m.): Last Sunday I had the pleasure of attending the annual Flinders Day celebration on Coochiemudlo Island, which is part of my electorate. In 1799 Matthew Flinders, in the sloop Norfolk, carried out the exploration and charting of the waters in Moreton Bay.

For the past couple of decades the island community has celebrated the significance of this day each July with an open day during which they stage a re-enactment of Flinders' historical landing. Local historian, Edward Jones, features prominently in the re-enactment as he plays the role of Matthew Flinders. The celebration is further enhanced by the local sea cadet unit, the TS Norfolk—which takes its name from that famous explorer's sloop—playing the role of the ship's crew in what is virtually a replica of the sloop Norfolk.

The people of Coochiemudlo are a very community-minded group of individuals. Some are artistic in temperament, which is evidenced by the number of art galleries and such places on the island. The community is also very fortunate in having a very close-knit progress association headed by Linda and Theo Gard, who are the major movers and shakers in coordinating the historical day. We are very much looking forward to 1999, which will mark the two hundredth anniversary of this particular landing. A replica of the sloop Norfolk is

currently being constructed in Tasmania and it will come to Queensland as part of that celebration year. We are very much looking forward to that.

Time expired.

Peninsula Nursing Home

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba) (10.27 a.m.): Honourable members might possibly be aware of media reports relating to the Peninsula Nursing Home. These reports featured Commonwealth monitoring of rating standards in the Peninsula Nursing Home, which took place in June last year.

At that time it was reported that the Peninsula Nursing Home passed only 11 of 31 outcome standards, and in respect of the others action was called for. It has not been reported that the Commonwealth rating of June this year had the result that the Peninsula Nursing Home was monitored as satisfactory or better in 27 out of the 31 outcome standards. Recently I visited the Peninsula Nursing Home and was impressed by the overall standard of the facility and of the commitment of the staff to addressing the concerns, most of which were minor, which arose out of the Commonwealth monitoring 13 months ago.

After the negative monitoring of June last year, the Peninsula Nursing Home suffered a sanction from the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth stopped funding for new admissions pending the outstanding matters being addressed. Since it appears that those matters have all been addressed, or are being addressed, it is time for the Commonwealth to stop the sanctions against the Peninsula Nursing Home.

The result of the sanctions has been a loss of staff hours. This means a reduction in income for staff working at the Peninsula Nursing Home and, therefore, a reduction in their quality of life. At the same time it means that members of the Redcliffe community are not as well served in terms of the number of nursing home beds available. It is time for the Commonwealth to give consideration to the lifting of these sanctions for the benefit of the workers and the nursing home residents of the Redcliffe peninsula and its environs.

Mental Health

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore) (10.29 p.m.): I was recently very fortunate to launch two mental health initiatives funded by the Queensland Government on the Sunshine Coast. Both these mental health projects have been developed under the auspices of Lifeline Sunshine Coast and we are very fortunate to have very capable service providers on the Sunshine Coast.

"The Healthy, Living Mind" project is a Lifeline Sunshine Coast project sponsored by the Queensland Health Promotion Council and the second project is the Youth Mental Health Project. I think it is appropriate that at this time we recognise that a lot of people living in our communities have mental health problems. It is time that we stripped away the myths that are associated with people who suffer from these problems. One in five people are expected, at some time in their lives, to suffer from a mental health problem and too often these people are marginalised. In addition, people do not understand the stress faced by the families of those who suffer mental health problems.

Lifeline Sunshine Coast is undertaking an exciting education project aimed at people's mental health. The project is coordinated by Kay Worth, a qualified mental health worker. The goals of the project are to increase people's awareness of the factors that maintain good mental health, to increase people's awareness of coping strategies and healthy living skills for minimising the exacerbation of mental health problems, to increase people's knowledge and understanding of mental health problems or mental illnesses, and to increase their knowledge and skills in early identification and intervention for people who have mental health problems.

Time expired.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Native Woodchip Export Industry

Mr BEATTIE (10.30 a.m.): In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the public comments of Natural Resources Minister Hobbs, as reported in the *Gympie Times* of 29 May 1996, and Primary Industries Minister Trevor Perrett, as reported in the *Courier-Mail* of 28 May 1996, supporting a native woodchip export industry in Queensland. I table both of those reports. I refer also to today's ministerial statement by the Primary Industries Minister which conveniently did not rule out or refer to the export of woodchips. I also remind the Premier of the fact that his signature appears at the end of what could be called a memorandum of understanding with the Queensland Conservation Council dated 19 January this year, which I table for the

information of the House. I ask: did the Premier read the document before he signed it? If he read the document, and if his signature is worth anything at all, what has happened to his promise contained in the document that the "coalition does not support a woodchip industry based on native forests in Queensland, nor does it support an export woodchip industry based on native forests"—I stress: no export woodchips. Thirdly, why did he deliberately deceive the Queensland Conservation Council about the export of woodchips?

Mr BORBIDGE: I regret to advise the House that I do not have a copy of the *Gympie Times* of 29 May with me today. In relation to the matters raised by the Leader of the Opposition, I suggest he direct his question to the Minister for Primary Industries.

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. Yesterday and today, the Premier has failed to answer questions, claiming that they do not relate to his responsibilities. Could he please inform the House what his responsibilities are?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker, they get to ask the questions; I get to answer them.

Mr A. Callaghan

Mr BEATTIE: In directing a question to the Treasurer, I refer to her recent choice of RSPCA official Allen Callaghan as a member of the State Library Board and the fact that in this House she referred to Mr Callaghan as repaying $1,000 a month towards the $43,500 he stole as a senior public servant. I also draw the Treasurer's attention to statutory declarations of RSPCA councillors Mary Christina Lowes, Ronald Glenney and Enid Overett in which they say that they are very concerned or alarmed at the level of Mr Callaghan's cash advances taken on his RSPCA Mastercard. For the information of the House, I table those statutory declarations. I ask: what checks, if any, did the Treasurer or her Acting Under Treasurer make before she submitted Mr Callaghan's name to the Governor in Council as a suitable member of the board?

Mrs SHELDON: I think any reference to Mr Callaghan and the RSPCA is being handled by the RSPCA Council, and I see that it has come out in support of Mr Callaghan.

Port Hinchinbrook Project

Mr ROWELL: I direct a question to the Minister for Environment. A claim has been made by the member for Everton that a secret plan was developed by the Commonwealth and State Governments to enable the Port Hinchinbrook project to proceed. I ask: is the member for Everton's claim of a secret plan accurate? Why has the honourable member for Everton opposed this project when his colleagues, as Ministers, signed a tripartite agreement with the Cardwell Shire Council and the developer so that the project could get under way?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: This question was asked yesterday, but we ran out of time. Firstly, there is no secret plan. However, it needs to be understood why the member for Everton would make such a statement. Two weeks ago, he came into possession of a briefing note from a departmental officer to me, and he chose to misrepresent it. We can understand that there is some sensitivity on the Opposition side of the House with respect to Port Hinchinbrook. It may be that the member for Everton is also related to Dr Carmen Lawrence, because he has conveniently forgotten that his colleagues were part of a Government that signed an agreement with respect to the environmental concerns of Queensland with the developer and the Cardwell Shire Council so that that development could go ahead.

The matter was then resting with the Federal Government. Mr Williams, the developer, thought he had the green light. In fact, he did have the green light, and he started to go ahead after the agreement between him, the previous State Labor Government and the former Federal Labor Government. All of sudden, the greens in north Queensland put pressure on Senator Faulkner, the then Federal Minister for the Environment, and he put a stop order on the work. Ever since then, the green movement in north Queensland has been rather confident that all it has to do is call out loudly and the Federal Government will jump up and down and stop whatever development it wishes to see stopped. There has been a change of Government federally as well.

The Labor Party in Queensland was a party to the agreement with the developer so that this project could go ahead. The former failed Labor Government has some sensitivity about environmental issues. It lost a lot of the green vote. In a desperate attempt to try to grab some brownie points from the greens, Opposition members thought, "We better find some excuse to muddy the water a bit." So the member for Everton seized on this briefing note and said, "There is a secret plan." I can assure honourable members that there is no

secret plan. This plan has been in development for weeks. It is called the Cardwell/Hinchinbrook Regional Coastal Management Plan. It takes into account aspects such as the Hinchinbrook Channel, Hinchinbrook Island, the Brook family and Goold Island national parks, and the impact that tourism and the population in general will have on that part of the world. It is all about being environmentally responsible.

If something is done by the conservatives, obviously it is a secret plan; if something is done by the Labor Party in Queensland or in Canberra, it is environmental responsibility! The reason the question was asked was the embarrassment on the part of the previous Government. The member for Everton forgot that his own colleagues were a party to signing this agreement, and he was desperately trying to find some way in which he could worm his way back in with the greens.

Mr A. Callaghan

Mr PALASZCZUK: In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to the fact that the State Government makes an annual six-figure grant to RSPCA Queensland and draw his attention to statutory declarations of RSPCA councillors Mary Christina Lowes, Ronald Glenney and Enid Overett in which they say they are very concerned or alarmed at the level of RSPCA official Allen Callaghan's cash advances taken on his RSPCA Mastercard. I ask: in light of these statutory declarations, what action will the Minister take to make sure that those Government funds have not been misused?

Mr PERRETT: Firstly, I thank the member for Inala. I have been waiting for the drought to break. It is just as well that I am an old bush fellow and have been through a few droughts. This is my first question without notice from the Opposition in five months. It is good to see the honourable member for Inala upstaging the Deputy Leader.

A Government member interjected.

Mr PERRETT: It has been suggested that we put the Deputy Leader out to agistment with a bit of forward freight subsidy.

Seriously, the State Government subsidises the RSPCA in inspectoral services only to the tune of $165,000 per year, a figure which was last adjusted by the former Government. That money is the only funding that is provided to the RSPCA. It is quarantined in a special account. In other words, it can be used only for inspectoral services. Fines which are imposed in the courts in cases brought by RSPCA inspectors are paid to the Government. For the State to take over the inspectoral services provided by the RSPCA, which has to beg and borrow to get its funding, would cost taxpayers millions of dollars. The RSPCA subsidises those services out of its own fundraising.

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. I would not wish for the Minister for Primary Industries to mislead the Parliament. The State Government does provide more funds to the RSPCA than simply for inspectorial services. The information that the Minister has been provided with may be incorrect, and perhaps he should check it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is replying.

Mr PERRETT: I have received advice from my department this morning, and I wish to advise the Parliament accordingly. I point out that Mr Mackenroth was the Minister who took the animal welfare legislation through 43 drafts at a cost of more than $1m to the taxpayers of this State but still brought nothing before the Parliament. He is skating on very thin ice.

This is a matter for the RSPCA Council. I am satisfied that funding provided by the Queensland Government to the RSPCA is not being misused.

Quality Assurance, Department of Public Works and Housing

Mr SPRINGBORG: I ask the Honourable Minister for Public Works and Housing: will he please outline for the House why he has chosen to review the existing policy on quality assurance?

Mr CONNOR: I thank the member for the question. Many members will realise just how difficult this issue is. It is not so much that quality assurance per se is the problem; the main problem is the policy adopted by this Government and the previous Government that in many cases quality assurance is compulsory for doing business with Government. That is the major issue. I am aware that the previous Government also had problems with this matter. For quite some time we saw the member for Ferny Grove and the member for Chatsworth playing pass the can on who was responsible for it.

The small-business community is saying, "Look, the hurdles are being raised too high. Small businesses cannot really afford the cost of implementing quality assurance and are therefore being ruled out of Government work." On the other hand, some businesses

are saying, "We are spending $50,000 or more putting in place quality assurance, but we are not getting the business." In regional areas of Queensland, where by necessity there are mostly small businesses, operators are saying that the bush is missing out because larger operators in south-east Queensland, who are doing more business with Government, are getting all the work and jobs are being lost from the bush. This is a complex issue. There are many competing interests.

There have also been allegations of inconsistencies across the State in the implementation of quality assurance. In some parts of Queensland, some Government agencies are requiring quality assurance across-the-board, but others are not requiring it at all. According to the department, over 14,000 Government employees are involved in purchasing across the State. So people from a receptionist at a local school buying pens and pencils to someone constructing a high-rise building in Brisbane are all trying to implement a policy which has seen a number of changes over a number of years. The policy is very inconsistent, and there is a problem with communication.

The question we have to ask is whether or not we need to make quality assurance compulsory and whether it should continue. Over the last few months when we have been trying to crank up this debate, I have found that industry groups have been silent. On behalf of their client base those groups should crank up this issue, because it is very important. If the Government makes a decision in relation to this matter, certain parties will be aggrieved whichever way we move—whether we stay with the existing policy, modify it or scrap it. Basically, those are the options available. There are various industry groups, and many of them have different positions. We have to look into this matter. We are doing that. We are looking to the industry groups to make their comments now, because in another six weeks or so it will be too late.

Premier's Visit to Japan and Korea; Mr D. Russell

Mr ELDER: I refer the Premier to one of his recent visits—the one to Japan and Korea—and his subsequent report to this Parliament indicating that he was unable to sign any formal agreements or letters of intent other than reaffirmations of existing agreements. I ask: did National Party President David Russell accompany the Premier on this visit? Were Government moneys used to cover the National Party President's fares and expenses?

Mr BORBIDGE: There was an approach from the two Japan/Australia trade organisations in Queensland for them to send representatives on this particular mission, as part of the mission included the signing of an agreement in Tokyo with those particular Brisbane organisations. One of the organisations nominated one particular gentleman; the other organisation nominated Mr David Russell in his capacity as vice president of that organisation. When that nomination came forward, I rejected the approval for Mr Russell to participate at taxpayers' expense. Subsequent to that, I was advised by the president of the organisation, Mr Alex McArthur, that Mr Russell was the nominee of their organisation—they wanted him to go—and Mr McArthur indicated to me that he had discussed the matter with a member of his executive, the member for Ipswich, Mr Hamill. I was subsequently advised by Mr McArthur and by the organisation that it was therefore appropriate to proceed.

Pollution Control Legislation

Mr CARROLL: I direct a question to the Minister for Environment. A newspaper report last Saturday claimed that Queensland was without pollution control legislation during the period of a licensing moratorium from 1 March to 30 June this year introduced by our new State Government to allow a review of the effectiveness and fairness of the Environmental Protection Act and regulations. Since that statement is untrue, I ask: can the Minister for Environment clarify the situation with regard to environmental protection during this interval?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I thank the member for Mansfield for the question. Obviously, he also read that article. It is a pity that the author of that article had not read *Hansard*, because some time ago in this House we had a debate on a disallowance motion moved by the member for Everton and we also amended the Environmental Protection Act. It was during that debate that it was suggested by members opposite that Queensland had been left without any environmental protection laws during the period of the moratorium. If the author of that article had taken the trouble to read *Hansard*, he would have seen that I gave an assurance to the House that I was advised by my departmental people that during that moratorium it was possible—and, in fact, I will

gave details in a moment—to be charged with a breach of a licence under the EPA Act or charged with a breach of the Act itself.

It was suggested by members opposite that Queensland was left without any cover whatsoever during that period. That is not the case. For the benefit of the House, I will now detail the sorts of things that went on in the period from 1 March to 1 July—the period of the moratorium. There were four notices to conduct or commission environmental evaluations, five environmental program notices, six notices requiring draft environmental management programs, seven environmental protection orders, one notice to provide relevant information, one notice of cancellation of existing licence and two prosecutions, one resulting in a conviction and fine and one on which judgment was reserved. I think that gives ample evidence of the fact that the article in the *Courier-Mail* was quite wrong. It is a pity that the author had not taken the time to check out his facts.

Break-out, Borallon Correctional Centre

Mr BARTON: I refer the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to the attempted break-out at Borallon Correctional Centre on Thursday, 18 July which resulted in injuries to a number of prison staff. This attempted break-out follows a significant increase in the number of successful escapes from custody since Mr Cooper's appointment as the Minister responsible for Corrective Services. They include a convicted murderer who escaped from Borallon who has not been recaptured as yet. I ask: could the Minister please explain the contributing factors to this significant rise in escapes? What steps has he taken to reverse this current revolving-door position in Queensland's Corrective Services?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr COOPER: Opposition members would know all about it. They used to let them out!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have yet to call the Minister for Police to answer the question. The House will come to order. I call the Honourable Minister for Police.

Mr COOPER: I heard Mr Braddy say, "What goes around comes around." I remember when he was the Minister for Corrective Services, among other things. There used to be zebra crossings outside the Arthur Gorrie, Sir David Longland, Moreton and Wacol Correctional Centres, and signs saying, "Prisoners Cross Here". Every week prisoners would be trotting out across those crossings that were specially designed so that prisoners would not be run down on their way out of gaol.

The Opposition spokesman raises the issue of escapes. Opposition members should not chuck too many stones around, because they are the people who allowed them out in the first place. The episode at Borallon was interesting. I believe that about five prisoners were involved. Yes, they did have a tractor inside the prison compound.

Mr Welford: Fantastic! You've done well.

Mr COOPER: That was bloody stupid, quite frankly. It should not have been there, and it is not there now. That tractor was used in the escape. Everyone knows what prisoners are like. If they can see something around that they could use in an escape, such as a tractor that they can hop onto, they will use it.

Those prison officers conducted themselves extremely well in that instance. They did the very best that they could under those circumstances. At one stage the prisoners did ask them for the keys to the tractor. The prison officers threw them the wrong keys, and they had a hell of a job getting that tractor going.

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Mount Coot-tha!

Mr COOPER: When they got hold of a shard of glass and put it to the throat of one of the prison officers, they decided it was time to get the tractor started, so they did. They headed towards the fence. There were a couple of prisoners on the back. One of them had a saw, there were a couple of mallet handles, and I think one of them had an axe. They were wielding them fairly well. Still the prison officers pursued them until they got to the fence. To cut a long story short—all of those escapees were apprehended. They are now back in the Sir David Longland Correctional Centre.

These things do happen from time to time. A full-scale investigation is being conducted into that incident. I commend those prison officers for their actions. That is what they are there for. Among other things, they are there to maintain security in our prisons. As I said, that tractor should not have been there. But these things creep in from time to

time. The tractor has gone now, and it will not be there again.

I have been a Minister before. I know that these things are going to occur from time to time. I also know that one has to take pretty tough and stringent action when they occur. I assure members that that action has been taken and will continue to be taken.

Domestic Violence

Mrs GAMIN: I ask the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care: in relation to his domestic violence policy and initiatives, will he expand the list of domestic violence program clients to include the elderly, children who witness violence, and men involved in domestic violence?

Mr LINGARD: I want to emphasise to the House that I and this Government certainly want to expand the assistance that we provide not only to women involved in domestic violence but also to the elderly who are involved in domestic violence, those young children who witness domestic violence, the men involved in domestic violence and non-spousal domestic violence. I wish to advise the House that, this year, we will spend $11.5m, representing an increase of $1m in the domestic violence program.

I also wish to say that, contrary to some comments by Opposition members last week, no domestic violence programs for women will be removed. The existing domestic violence programs for women will continue and, in fact, will be expanded. The programs will be expanded to include young children who witness domestic violence. A total of 11 special counsellors will be provided. I know that this was announced by the previous Government. That program will be put in place. Service centres will be put in place, as will special men to answer the hotline for men involved in domestic violence. Those men can then be advised where they can receive advice. I will have at least eight perpetrator programs for men, which will provide advice to those men who may consider that they are perpetrators of domestic violence. I hope to have 10 of those in operation within 12 months.

I will immediately allocate another $239,000 to the Townsville/Thuringowa area and Palm Island for those women and young children who need to escape to refuges. I will also have a new program of at least $140,000 in the South Burnett area. This will bring to $1m our increase in the domestic violence program. However, I wish to say that no programs for women will be removed. They will increase for the elderly, young children who witness domestic violence, and especially for those men who are perpetrators of domestic violence.

Mrs R. Joyner; Speakers in Schools

Mr BREDHAUER: In directing a question to the Education Minister, I remind members of the fact that morals crusader and creationist Rona Joyner, who has contested the last seven State and Federal elections, was responsible for many education policy decisions when she was a key adviser to the National Party in the 1980s. I ask: does the Minister approve of Mrs Joyner being invited by Education Department officers to speak at a Maroochydore State school next month? Will this Government allow people such as Mrs Joyner to run political campaigns in schools and to tell our school children that creationism is a scientific fact? Is it true that Mrs Joyner will join the long list of Bjelke-Petersen advisers who are being welcomed back to key positions with this National Party-dominated Government which is so determined to turn back the clock to the bad old days?

Mr QUINN: I have no knowledge of the circumstances as outlined by the member for Cook. However, I do make the point that schools are at liberty to arrange speakers within their own school communities as they see fit. The member for Cook would realise that this is a longstanding tradition. Neither this Government nor previous Labor Governments under various Ministers have ever told school communities whom they can invite into their schools to speak to their students on particular matters. This is not a Government that wishes to censor school communities in that way. As members opposite did when they were in Government, we realise that principals and school communities make that decision themselves based on their own knowledge of what is needed in their schools.

Mr Bredhauer interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cook!

Mr QUINN: I am not aware of the particular circumstances in this instance. However, I have great faith in the common sense and ability of school principals, the P & C associations and the staff of schools to make that professional judgment as to what range of people they need to invite into their schools. If there is an objection by the school community, I am quite sure that the school

principal will take those views on board and make the appropriate decision.

Mental Health Services

Mr HEGARTY: I direct a question to the Minister for Health. According to recent media reports, none of Queensland's 75 mental health services met minimum health standards. Could the Minister advise the House if this is true?

Mr HORAN: Once again, the previous Labor Government has been exposed for the lip-service that it provided to many important and essential health services. About two and a half years after minimum service standards were introduced for mental health services, an independent audit has exposed the previous Government for its lack of commitment to mental health services. What actually happened was that, in some years, the former Government put additional money into mental health. However, that money never got there. It is no wonder the people of Queensland threw them out of office. They have seen all that money going into Health, but they have never seen any of it transposed into real hands-on service. It is a real indictment of the former Regional Health Authority system in Queensland that money was going to the regions but it was never getting to the people whom it was supposed to serve.

Members opposite stood up on Budget night and said that extra money was allocated for mental health, but that money never got to the people. I will give honourable members an example. Between the years 1992-93 and 1993-94, $1.8m of new funding was provided through the Mental Health Branch, but only $500,000—or far less than 30 per cent—actually reached real mental health expenditure. To where was all the other money syphoned off? Perhaps it went to all the fancy programs that the members opposite liked to fund while the poor mental health workers, carers and patients suffered.

This audit is not only an indictment of the way the previous Government could not manage and organise mental health services but also it has given us the opportunity to demonstrate what we are going to do. We will bring about immediately a quarantine system so that money that is provided for mental health services will actually be delivered to mental health services within the districts. That will come about not only through the oversight of that delivery by our district health councils but also through the implementation of our 10-year plan and immediate action by our district managers to implement the recommendations of the audit. That quarantine process will also be assisted by having a single accountable officer for all mental health services within a district. We will have cost centre accounting and reporting through a specific schedule of the Queensland Government financial management system. Honourable members should consider what Carmen Lawrence said in June 1995 in a letter to one of the former Health Ministers, Mr Jim Elder. She stated—

> "I am concerned that Queensland has reported as the lowest per capita spending jurisdiction on mental health services in 1993-94 and that per capita expenditure has fallen over the previous year."

I will share a few more figures with honourable members. We have inherited the lowest per capita mental health expenditure in Australia, $45 per head, which is 18 per cent less than the national average of $55. I have already cited the example of the two financial years of 1992-93 and 1993-94, in which $1.8m of new funding was provided through the Mental Health Branch, but the expenditure increased by only $500,000. Where did the other $1.3m go? Population growth has resulted in a fall in per capita expenditure from $46 to $45. Gross mismanagement by the previous Labor Government has meant that Queensland is at risk of contravening the Medicare agreement.

We often hear from members of the Opposition about what they did when they were in Government. Once again, these figures expose them fully for the frauds that they were. The former Government was all about publicity, posters on the wall and announcements. However, when it came to the real things, such as money going to community mental health workers, mental health carers and mental health teams, it just was not there. The money had evaporated; it had been used to prop up that Government's blown-out Budgets for the past two years, which we have inherited—the $70m. The former Government syphoned off and transferred valuable mental health money to all its fancy little schemes.

Mr R. Pitt; Dr B. Senewiratne

Mrs EDMOND: I refer to the Health Minister's recent media comments that he did not authorise the 3 July letter from his Deputy Director-General, Mr Ross Pitt, to Dr Brian Senewiratne of the Princess Alexandra Hospital in which Mr Pitt attempts to bully the doctor into resigning his commission from Queensland Health. I ask: if it is true that, as

the Minister claims, Mr Pitt's highly offensive letter was personal and not written in his official capacity as a senior Health Department officer, can the Minister explain why Mr Pitt's letter was written on official Queensland Health stationery and has a departmental file reference number DG013400 RP:CG? Will he discipline Mr Pitt for misusing his senior departmental position to wage a personal vendetta against medical staff who dare to criticise the Minister's policies and ability?

Mr HORAN: I thank the honourable member for her question. She probably also read in the media that Dr Brian Senewiratne and I have had a chat in which I told him that he is welcome to stay in his position as long as he likes. He is a very valued visiting medical officer who has provided great service to the Queensland public hospital system. I would also like to commend Dr Brian Senewiratne because I think that he was one of the major reasons why we were able to force the previous Government to do something about the disgraceful accident and emergency unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. In fact, we so embarrassed the former Health Minister, Mr Elder, that he was forced to do nothing else but ensure funding was available to fix that accident and emergency unit. That work will be finished very shortly. I will take great pleasure in performing an opening ceremony at that unit and being able to thank Dr Brian Senewiratne for the work that he did in forcing the previous Labor Government to rectify that disgraceful situation.

As to the Princess Alexandra Hospital and the question raised by the Opposition spokesperson—it may well be that the officer in the department is quite frustrated at the magnificent efforts that this Government has made at the Princess Alexandra Hospital since we have taken office. Already we have been able to straighten out the matter of bed numbers so that the redevelopment of the Princess Alexandra Hospital can go ahead. Already, under the Surgery On Time Plan, we have provided the Princess Alexandra Hospital with the highest amount of money of any of the 10 major hospitals in the State for new equipment in its theatres. Already we have provided Princess Alexandra Hospital with millions of dollars for CAT scanners, a fluoroscope and other radiology equipment. What we are doing for that hospital is simply outstanding.

In addition, we have announced a plan for the south side of Brisbane. All the problems that occurred under the previous Labor Government—it reduced beds at the Princess Alexandra Hospital; it virtually destroyed the QE II Hospital from a 160-bed hospital down to a weekend nine-bed hospital; it sold off the Greenslopes Hospital and removed 70 public beds from the south side of Brisbane—will be rectified by us. We are bringing the QE II Hospital back on stream. Already we have five senior medical directors appointed for the hospital. Already we have made announcements about increasing the bed numbers at the Logan Hospital and the Redlands Hospital through a major Capital Works Program. So everything on the south side of Brisbane is well on track. I think this Government deserves congratulations for fixing up all the problems on the south side of Brisbane.

Sacking of Schoolteachers; Claims by Mr I. Mackie

Mr MALONE: I refer the Minister for Education to recent statements by the Queensland Teachers Union president, Ian Mackie, that the State Government plans to sack 2,000 schoolteachers. Can the Minister please advise if there is any truth to Mr Mackie's claims?

Mr QUINN: I think the claim being made by the Queensland Teachers Union that we intend to sack 2,000 teachers and close hundreds of schools deserves to be put to rest straightaway. I caution any member on either side of the Chamber about repeating those claims as the member for Cook did here this morning. There is no truth in those claims at all. I suspect that the origin of the claim was a newspaper report quite some months ago, which was unconfirmed by me but has since gained a measure of truth in the Queensland Teachers Union, particularly in its executive. As I said, there is no truth in that claim. That figure was bandied around in early Budget considerations some months ago, and I would caution members opposite about using it.

The reason I think that the Queensland Teachers Union, and its president in particular, is bandying around those figures throughout regional Queensland and scaring teachers and parents is that a union election is in progress. This issue is more about re-electing the president of the Queensland Teachers Union than providing accurate information to parents and teachers. I caution members opposite and members on this side of the Chamber about using those unsubstantiated

and unfounded figures because at the end of the day their credibility will be at risk.

Kirwan Hospital

Mr McELLIGOTT: I refer the Minister for Health to his election promise of 27 June 1995 that a coalition Government would provide accident, emergency and outpatient facilities at the Kirwan Hospital, and I ask: how does the Minister propose to honour this election promise in the light of his most recent announcement that maternity services are to be transferred to Townsville General Hospital and that Kirwan is to be converted to a long-term rehabilitation unit?

Mr HORAN: I thank the honourable member for his question and I am pleased to answer it. The redevelopment of Townsville General Hospital is going to be a major Capital Works Program costing many millions of dollars, and it is important that we get it right for Townsville.

Obviously, the member has his facts wrong, because at the moment there is a planning process in place. The Government is talking to members of local governments and other people involved in medical services in that area to make sure that everybody has their say so that it gets it right. For many years in Townsville, the strong body of opinion has been that the maternity services would be better located in a new complex at the Townsville General Hospital where they would be adjacent to services such as anaesthetics and other important services.

The proposal that has been made to the Government—which would be outstanding for Townsville if it came to fruition, but it is only a proposal—is that the new complex at the Townsville General Hospital include a north Queensland women's institute with not only the best in tertiary maternity services, and I will come soon to what the member wants to know, and neonatal services but also gynaecological cancer services and located nearby a paediatrics ward. I emphasise that it is a proposal. However, if that were to occur, the proposal for Kirwan Hospital is for it to have an accident and emergency ward in addition to rehabilitation services. Those rehabilitation services would include a spinal rehabilitation unit, which sadly north Queensland lacks. At the moment, people who suffer spinal injuries have to come to Brisbane not only for their short-term rehabilitation but also for their long-term rehabilitation. That rehabilitation centre would also include rehabilitation for north Queenslanders who suffer head injuries as a result of traffic accidents or sporting accidents.

I can give the honourable member an assurance that one of the major proposals for Kirwan Hospital is that it will include an accident and emergency unit. Only last week I spoke to the planners and the officials involved and advised them that that was one of the Government's policy directions.

Mr D. Russell

Mr HEALY: I ask the Premier: can he advise the House of any additional information in respect of the participation of Mr David Russell in his recent trade mission to Japan?

Mr BORBIDGE: I thank the honourable member for his question. It demonstrates that, obviously, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition does not talk to the shadow Treasurer. I have some documentation that I want to read into *Hansard*. However, I would like to say, firstly, that the two peak business groups in Queensland that have dealings with Japan are the Australia Japan Society Queensland, of which Mr Alex McArthur is the President, and the Queensland Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, of which Mr David Thomas is the president. I am further advised, and I have been aware for some time, that Mr David Russell is the Senior Vice-President of the Australia Japan Society Queensland.

It was decided that both peak groups should be invited to send representatives on the recent Queensland Government mission to Japan. In the course of those discussions, the society of which Mr Thomas is president was invited to nominate a representative. Mr McArthur indicated that he was not available to go and the society wished to nominate its vice-president—the incoming president—Mr David Russell. At that time, I had reservations about such a course of action. I indicated to Mr McArthur those particular reservations and a subsequent approach was made to me on behalf of the Australia Japan Society Queensland. I indicated that because of obvious political sensitivities, I would prefer the matter to be raised with the Opposition as I was aware that Mr Hamill, the shadow Treasurer and member for Ipswich, was a member of the executive of the Australia Japan Society Queensland.

I have a letter dated 22 May 1996 addressed to Alex McArthur, President, Australia Japan Society, Brisbane, which states—

"Dear Alex

I write in relation to the proposed Queensland Government mission to Japan and I wish to confirm the view which I expressed to you in our recent telephone conversation that if the Queensland Government is prepared to provide the financial support necessary to fund a representative of the Australia Japan Society—Queensland as a member of the mission, then I believe it would be appropriate for an executive member of the Society to be included accordingly.

Yours sincerely

Hon. David Hamill MLA

Shadow Minister and Member for Ipswich"

I have another letter from Mr McArthur, which was addressed to Mr Takahashi of the Japan Australia New Zealand Society in Tokyo. It states—

"Dear Mr Takahashi

Thank you very much for your fax of 23 May 1996. I am also most grateful for you taking up the matter with President Kuroda. There is no doubt that Mr Russell's presence in Tokyo to sign an agreement with Mr Kuroda and this being witnessed by the Premier of Queensland . . . and a number of . . . executive officers and the Minister for Trade . . . will be a big step towards cementing the relations between Japan and Queensland.

Hereunder I suggest the words for the declaration.

Regards

Alex McArthur"

I indicate that if there is some dispute among the Labor Party and between the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Ipswich, then perhaps they might like to raise it with Alex McArthur, the President of the Australia Japan Society Queensland.

Mr ELDER: I rise to a point of order. The original invitation was sent to the president and when it was sent to the president, the society said that it would pay. I want to know why, when the vice-president went, the Government paid.

Mr SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Debate interrupted.

PRIVILEGE

Australia Japan Society Queensland

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich) (11.18 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. Today in question time, the Premier has twice purported to suggest that I had the responsibility of authorising Mr David Russell's participation in this delegation to Japan. I want to make it clear to the Premier, as indeed I had made it clear to Mr McArthur in relation to this matter, that, yes, I am an executive member of the Australia Japan Society, but I could not presume to speak on behalf of that society. The question of who represents the society as part of a delegation to anywhere is a matter for the society as a whole.

I table the letter, which I think is the letter from which the Premier quoted, in which it makes that view abundantly clear—that I could not speak on behalf of the society, that it was the society as a whole that should determine who represented the society as part of a delegation. I did not specifically endorse any member of the society to be part of a delegation. That is made clear in the letter, which I table. I think that it would be impertinent of any individual member of any society to unilaterally make a decision about who should represent that society in relation to a public function or otherwise.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Health Department Appointments

Ms BLIGH: I refer the Minister for Health to a series of statements attempting to justify his latest bungling of senior appointments in his department where he firstly claimed to have withdrawn 21 appointments from Cabinet consideration because the name of one candidate was leaked to the media. He subsequently claimed that Cabinet rejected the appointments because he was not happy with the selection panel. I ask: why did the Minister take the appointments to Cabinet if he was not happy with the panels? What is his official explanation of this bungling? Will the Minister guarantee that the positions will be readvertised at the same level and same remuneration? When will Queensland Health appoint a senior management team?

Mr HORAN: I thank the honourable member for her question. Obviously, if things are going to be done right in this State, it is important that if we take matters to Cabinet we make sure that they are not bounced around in the media the morning before. The big lesson for everybody is that to run a political agenda one cannot bounce around names of

people who may or may not be on lists or whatever. I would correct the honourable member: she is wrong about there being 21 names; it was fewer than that.

The point is that when we take a list of recommendations to Cabinet, we want to make sure that the situation is not compromised. Again I state: the big message is that if certain people want to bounce around issues in the media on the morning that certain submissions are going to Cabinet, those submissions will be withdrawn and we will do them again.

Business Investment

Mr WOOLMER: I refer the Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry to recent comments made by the Opposition in relation to what this Government has done in terms of business investment for this State. Will the Minister outline to the House what this Government has in fact done to attract business investment to Queensland?

Mr DAVIDSON: As all members of this House are aware and as business in Queensland is aware, I have acted efficiently on the Government's behalf to ensure that we are best placed to facilitate the needs of business in this State. Later today I will introduce a Bill to highlight exactly what this Government has been doing for business. I would add that previous Ministers were very inefficient in meeting the needs of business and, indeed, in meeting with business people themselves. In the short time that I have been Minister, many business people have told me that in the past they were never able to arrange meetings with Government representatives, and especially not with the Ministers for Small Business. That was very frustrating for them when they were trying to meet the progressive requirements of the commercial world.

Mr Elder: Name them! Name who said that.

Mr DAVIDSON: The honourable member knows who they are. In the short time that I have been Minister I have been very active. I will be making some major announcements in the coming months as to what this Government will be doing to restructure the Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry to ensure that the Government provides the best possible services and programs for business.

The Government has secured projects valued at about $22m and which will employ about 111 Queenslanders in the coming months. We have secured Sealright Packaging's $9m state-of-the-art operation in Brisbane which will supply plastic labels to Coca Cola for its entire Australasian bottling operations, resulting in the employment of 43 people. Last week I was lucky enough to be able to visit the Foodpartners facility at Ipswich. Foodpartners is a division of Australian Meat Holdings. A $4.5m facility will be built at Ipswich to supply pizza toppings to Australian and overseas markets. That will result in 34 more jobs. At the moment we are working with a New Zealand textile manufacturing company which is soon to announce that it is accepting our offer to build an $8.5m facility in Queensland, thus creating up to 35 additional jobs. This will be a strategic investment for this State's textile and clothing industries. The industry itself is very excited about this proposal from the New Zealand textile manufacturing company.

The Government has been giving business the best possible incentives and environment so that it can create employment and economic growth in Queensland. I also take this opportunity to inform the House that I am releasing investment profiles on 17 industry sectors in Queensland. From biotechnology to transport, these superbly presented profiles tell a story which leaves an investor asking, "Where do I sign?" Profiles have been compiled by leading industry specialists who have researched market trends, Queensland's competitive advantages, our improving business environment, major corporate players, and, most importantly, investment opportunities within Queensland. These profiles are a starting point for identifying high potential investment areas for business people throughout Queensland, Australia and the world. That is what this Government is about: creating investment and business growth in Queensland.

Queensland Ambulance Service

Mr PEARCE: I ask the Minister for Local Government and Planning, who is also the acting Minister for Emergency Services: given that sections of the Queensland Ambulance Service have been told to prepare themselves for self-regulation from 1 October this year, could the Minister inform the House and the people of Queensland as to the accuracy of reports that the QAS will be administered by a board which will report directly to the Minister? What services currently provided by the QAS will be offered to private enterprise?

Mrs McCAULEY: I am most impressed that the honourable member believes that

because I am the acting Minister for Emergency Services I have that sort of knowledge at my fingertips. If he will put his question in writing, I will make sure that he gets the correct information from the department.

Townsville Railway Workshops

Mr TANTI: I direct a question to the Minister for Transport. Yesterday in this House the Minister made mention of the Government's commitment to upgrade Queensland Rail workshop facilities in Townsville. I ask: what will this upgrade comprise and what benefits will it bring to Townsville?

Mr JOHNSON: I thank the honourable member for Mundingburra for the question. Yesterday I did make reference to this Government's commitment to an expenditure of some $8m towards the upgrading of the Townsville South workshop facility. I would say from the outset that this was an election promise made well before the 15 July State election and it is an election commitment that we will be honouring.

As members will be well aware, for many years Townsville has been a very important railway centre. It has provided a great network of workshop facilities. We want to make Townsville one of the main workshop facilities in the Queensland Rail network. With the upgrading of the Townsville South yard, we will be winding down the north yard over a period of 18 months. The two yards will be melded into one, with the possible sale of the north yard. Apprentices will return to the railway workshops in Townsville—a practice which the former Government crucified in recent years. We have seen a reduction in the workforce of some 600 men to a little over 200 men at this stage. The Government will honour its commitment and there will be full retention of staff and a continuity of jobs in Townsville.

The honourable member for Mundingburra asked what the benefits to Townsville will be. A few years ago, when those workshops were working at full capacity, Townsville benefited from flow-on effects valued at between $15m and $25m. The Government will ensure that the community of Townsville, including the business community, will be the recipient of our commitment to making sure that those facilities are maintained in Townsville.

As I said yesterday, with the mineral boom in the north west mineral province, Queensland Rail is going to play a very significant role in the carriage of a lot of that mineral from the province to the port of Townsville. With the upgrading of the rail infrastructure, which will interface with the port of Townsville, the railway workshops in Townsville will play a very significant role in maintaining the commitment that the Government has to that centre.

Townsville has always been an important strategic centre for Queensland Rail, which is something that the former Government did not recognise. This Government does recognise that, and I assure the members of this Parliament and those people currently employed in the workshops in Townsville that we will honour our commitment. Last week I assured the people of Townsville that that commitment will be honoured and that the forthcoming Budget will provide $8m to upgrade the Townsville facility.

Last week I met with members of five Townsville unions. I have to say that the reception that this Government received at that meeting was nothing but fruitful. The atmosphere was cordial, which is something that the unions never enjoyed at meetings with the former Government. The Government will be working with the unions and the people of Townsville. I assure the member for Mundingburra that that workshop facility will be unequalled in north Queensland. Yesterday the member for Rockhampton mentioned the facility at Rockhampton——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions has expired.

PRIVILEGE

South East Freeway Widening

Mr ROBERTSON (Sunnybank) (11.30 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. I refer to the ministerial statement of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads in the House today in which he claimed that his department had assured him that all 13,000 newsletters had been distributed to residents within a 350-metre corridor along the South East Freeway. This morning, following the Minister's statement, I have been in contact with a number of residents of Underwood. I have been advised that those residents have still not received this newsletter, even though those residents live less than 10 metres from the South East Freeway and will therefore be most affected by any proposal to widen the freeway. Although I do not believe the Minister has deliberately misled the House, I do believe he has once again been misled by his

department. Once again, he has demonstrated that he is just not up to it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed that matter of privilege. I advise the honourable member that points of privilege should be taken on a matter directly arising at the time, otherwise he should write directly to me.

LOTTERIES AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (11.31 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Lotteries Act 1994."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mrs Sheldon, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. J. M. SHELDON (Caloundra—Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for The Arts) (11.32 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The purpose of this Bill is to clarify the contractual arrangements between the Golden Casket Lottery Corporation and its agents. As my colleagues will be aware, the corporation conducts its lotteries through a network of agents. Those agents act for the corporation via agreements entered into between the corporation and each agent. The corporation has historically held such agreements with agents who are structured as corporations, like family companies and trusts, as well as with agents who are natural persons.

It is interesting to note that the corporation has approximately 1,200 agents, of which around 80 per cent are corporate persons. The Lotteries Act was significantly altered in December last year and, as part of such amendments, the corporation's ability to contract with corporate persons was inadvertently removed. Consequently, this amendment is needed in order to validate agreements made since December 1995 and to ensure that the corporation can continue with its usual contracting arrangements with its agents. The Bill is therefore merely a technical amendment aimed at restoring existing commercial practices between the corporation and its agents. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hamill, adjourned.

SEA-CARRIAGE DOCUMENTS BILL

Hon. D. E. BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.33 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to reform the law relating to bills of lading, sea waybills and ships' delivery orders, and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Beanland, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. D. E. BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.34 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

This Bill ensures that Queensland legislation in the area of title to sue on sea-carriage documents meets the expectations of modern commercial practice. In 1992 the Mercantile Law Association of Australia and New Zealand approached the Commonwealth Government expressing concern over inadequacies in the existing legislation of the various States relating to entitlement to sue under bills of lading. Extensive consultation followed with the circulation of two discussion papers and a draft Bill based on the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act (UK) 1992. I am pleased to report that the Bill has received across-the-board support from the commercial interests affected. Cargo owners, carriers and insurers have all indicated their full support for the Bill.

The existing legislation relating to entitlement to sue under a bill of lading is contained in the Mercantile Act of 1867. A bill of lading contains or evidences a contract for the carriage of goods by sea. At common law, as the contract of carriage is made between the shipper and the carrier, only those two parties can sue on the contract. While goods

are often on-sold during a voyage through endorsement of the bill of lading, at common law those subsequent purchasers have no right to sue the carrier for breach of the contract of carriage. Sections 5 to 7 of the Mercantile Act remedy this situation by providing that subsequent endorsees of a bill of lading have a right to sue the carrier in contract.

However, commercial practices have developed which mean that endorsees of a bill of lading do not always gain the benefit of the statute as expected. Under the Mercantile Act the endorsee only gains the right to sue if the entire property in the goods passes on or by reason of the endorsement. The provisions of this Bill, however, enable an endorsee to sue the carrier of the goods even when it is agreed that property in the goods passes independently of the endorsement of the bill of lading.

The Bill also addresses existing uncertainties surrounding the rights of parties who are given a mortgage or pledge over goods. Presently, such parties have no automatic right to sue the carrier under a bill of lading for loss of or damage to goods pledged to them. In order to enforce such rights they have been faced with the uncertainty of trying to prove the existence of an implied contract. This Bill will recognise that banks and other parties who realise their security over goods referred to in a bill of lading have title to sue for damage to or loss of those goods.

The past 30 years in Australia have seen the introduction and increased use of containerised shipping of bulk cargoes on a scale never anticipated 100 years ago. However, case law has failed to reflect industry development and the anomalous situation has developed where the courts have indicated the present provisions of the Mercantile Act, as regards bills of lading, do not apply to the sale of a portion of a bulk cargo such as oil or grain. The new entitlement to sue provisions of this Bill ensure that purchasers of parts of bulk cargoes have the same rights against the carriers of goods as other purchasers.

The Mercantile Act also has no application to non-negotiable sea-carriage documents such as sea waybills and ships' delivery orders. These documents are in frequent use on voyages into and out of Queensland. While they evidence the contract of carriage, they do not act as documents of title to the goods, as do bills of lading. The goods can therefore be collected at the port without presentation of the document. The use of these documents can avoid delays associated with the use of bills of lading which may arrive at a port days or weeks after the goods.

The Bill also applies to sea-carriage documents in electronic form. In this way, it is an improvement on the equivalent United Kingdom legislation. The Bill facilitates the use of electronic data interchange, technology which is becoming increasingly prevalent in the shipping industry. The Bill allows the parties freedom to contract through electronic means using procedures and conventions agreed to between themselves. Finally, the Bill does not affect the operation of The Hague Rules on liability in respect of cargoes carried under a bill of lading.

The passage of this Bill will ensure that Queensland's laws relating to carriage of goods by sea meet the demands of commercial practice both here and abroad. Queensland has the opportunity to be the first State in Australia to introduce a Bill which redresses the inadequacies of the existing nineteenth century legislation in this area. It is important for Queensland's international trading relations that our legislation evolve in line with modern developments in the export industry. As the first State in Australia to introduce the Sea-Carriage Documents Bill, Queensland is adopting a leadership role, and would urge other States to follow suit without delay. The adoption of this Bill will facilitate reform in an area of vital significance to the State and national economy. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Foley, adjourned.

REFERENDUMS BILL

Hon. D. E. BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.40 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to provide for the conduct of a referendum, and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Beanland, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. D. E. BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (11.40 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Up until the present decade, a referendum had not been held in this State for many years. In recent years, two referendums have been conducted, namely the 1991 constitutional referendum concerning four-year parliamentary terms and the 1992 question concerning daylight saving. Both referendums were conducted under the Referendums Act 1989, which relied upon the now repealed Elections Act 1983. The replacement of the Elections Act with the Electoral Act 1992 has made it necessary to update the machinery provisions in the Referendums Act to accord with those contained in the current Electoral Act. Should this House resolve to hold a referendum, it cannot do so until the machinery provisions of the current Act are updated to parallel the Electoral Commission of Queensland structure created under the Electoral Act. Thus, the objective of this Bill is to replace the obsolete Referendums Act 1989 and synchronise the conduct of referendums in line with the new machinery provisions contained in the Electoral Act 1992.

This exercise to update the Referendums Act has been necessary for some time, although it received a relatively low priority under the previous administration. It is now timely to introduce the Bill, which in itself is non-contentious, and thus ensure that the mechanisms are in place to hold a referendum should this House so resolve. There are, however, a few points of variance between the existing Referendums Act and the proposed Bill. The new Bill does not provide a mechanism for State referendums to be held at the same time as the triennial municipal elections. In 1991, the four-year parliamentary term referendum was held on the same day as the 1991 council elections. Electoral processes for local government elections are based on significantly different arrangements from those conducted by the Electoral Commission of Queensland, the body with responsibility for organising referendums. In order to synchronise the 1991 conjoint State referendum with council elections, the Act had to include extraordinary provisions which effectively allowed the Electoral Commissioner to unilaterally override any statutory provision in order to effect in a practical way the conduct of the conjoint polls. This was tantamount to bestowing upon a Government official legislative power that is ordinarily only the province of the Queensland Parliament. Those powers needed to be invoked by the commissioner at the time. In principle, it is inappropriate for public officials to be vested with such extraordinary powers.

The holding of a State referendum at the same time as council elections gives rise to numerous practical problems. For example, a polling booth for a State electorate may extend over two or three local government areas. Each polling booth may potentially be juggling two or three different rolls on polling day. Conversely, the Electoral Commission of Queensland determines where the polling booths are located for the State polls and unwittingly the polling booths so established may not accord with the same places where electors are accustomed to vote at their council elections. This issue becomes particularly important to rural voters. Moreover, there are no local government elections in some areas, and specific referendum arrangements would be required to be made by the Electoral Commission of Queensland, as was the case in 1991. Local government elections are not held in areas, for example, where there are insufficient candidates to make a poll necessary. Also, some local government elections are conducted entirely by postal ballot. The 1991 conjoint poll resulted in voter confusion and caused a significantly high informal vote at some council elections. Many local governments wrote to the then Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning requesting that the holding of local government elections and referendums simultaneously should not occur again.

Because of the administrative difficulties outlined above, the Electoral Commission of Queensland is likewise opposed to the holding of a referendum simultaneously with local government elections. For these reasons, the proposed Bill does not provide for the possibility of holding a referendum with local government elections. However, the same type of difficulty does not arise should a referendum be held at the same time as a State general election because the rolls will be the same for each electorate, and the same polling booths can be used with ease. Should the Government decide to hold a general election at the same time as a referendum, certain additional machinery provisions are necessary. For example, the critical dates within the referendum/election period will need, for logistical reasons, to correspond. For example, in synchronising the timetable when a constitutional referendum is involved, it is crucially important to be mindful that the various constitution Acts specifically provide that the polling day for the referendum cannot be less than two months after the proposed Bill (the subject of the referendum) has been passed by the Assembly. Provisions are necessary to ensure that the relevant

timetables can be synchronised so that the polls can be conducted on the same day.

As well, it would be an unnecessary administrative burden were electors required to complete, say, two declaration forms to be a declaration voter at both the referendum and the election. Provisions are needed to provide that, when held on the same day, the one declaration form may be used in respect of both the referendum and the election. A number of provisions have thus been included in the Bill to ensure that appropriate matters common to both events can be merged to prevent unnecessary duplication. The Bill also accommodates the possibility of holding multiple referendums, that is, multiple questions, at the one time.

Finally, the Bill also provides a process of challenging the referendum results which is fairer than that which currently exists under the Referendums Act. Under current section 7.1 of the Referendums Act 1989, the results of a referendum could only be challenged in the Elections Tribunal—which body is now non-existent, its replacement being the Court of Disputed Returns—by a referral from the Legislative Assembly. This means that only the "Yes" or "No" case which was supported by the majority of the Assembly, normally the "Yes" case, had the right of challenge. Whichever case did not have the support of the Assembly could not legally mount a challenge. The denial of a right of challenge to supporters of either the "Yes" case or "No" case, depending upon which was supported by the majority of the Assembly, is simply unfair. The legislation should give a right of challenge to any member of the Legislative Assembly. In the interests of equity, it is suggested that the right of challenge should be available to "any member". The Bill has made the appropriate alteration to clarify that any member, not just the majority of the Legislative Assembly, has a right of challenge in the Court of Disputed Returns.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Foley, adjourned.

QUEENSLAND SMALL BUSINESS CORPORATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. B. W. DAVIDSON (Noosa—Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry) (11.47 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Queensland Small Business Corporation Act 1990."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Davidson, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. B. W. DAVIDSON (Noosa—Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry) (11.48 a.m.): I move—

> "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Today I am introducing amendments which will bring forward the termination date of the Queensland Small Business Corporation Act 1990 from 30 June 2001 to 31 December 1996. This amendment is necessary to enable the final integration of the corporation with my Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry.

The decision to integrate the QSBC into my department has come after considerable discussions and deliberations, mainly with business leaders, who wanted to see changes. There was too much confusion and duplication for small business caused by the artificial distinction between services offered by my department and the QSBC. There were significant examples of bureaucratic waste due to the overlap of services between the QSBC and my department. In one regional office shared between my department and the QSBC, there was a division running down the middle of the reception desk with two receptionists and two incompatible reception computers. This was in an office of seven people. Also, in one regional city there was a department office and a QSBC office facing each other in the same street.

By integrating the QSBC's activities into my department, there will be an initial saving of $1.5m simply through the elimination of duplicated administrative and accommodation costs without a loss of any services. Services will continue to be delivered and no regional area will be adversely affected. In fact, services to Queensland small businesses will be greatly enhanced by the combination of the expertise of QSBC staff and my department's business specialists working together to provide integrated services to clients.

In future, my department's specialists will adopt the following roles as a result of the amalgamation—

> promoting the development and use of private sector business management services to small business;

promoting awareness and disseminating information on basic business management practices to people in or intending to establish a small business;

developing and encouraging training and educational programs relating to small-business management; and

providing initial advice and counselling on basic business management practices and skills to people in or intending to establish a small business.

Services formerly developed and delivered through the QSBC will be delivered through my department's regional office network with support from a specialised unit in head office.

Six new head office positions will be created to undertake functions formally addressed by the QSBC to develop, monitor and evaluate services, pilot programs and education agreements. These head office staff will support the activities of 15 small-business advisers located in my department's regional office network. The emphasis will be on delivering high-quality services to small businesses, whether they be intenders, new starters or established businesses.

I have also established a pilot out-sourcing program with the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry to commence this financial year, aimed at providing a choice of services to new business intenders and small business owners. I would like to stress that this is a pilot program and, should it be successful, I foresee the program being offered to other associations on a competitive basis. This arrangement will give small business a choice and greater delivery flexibility. It was not difficult at all; it just took a bit of guts, and now the business community of Queensland are thankful.

Business Queensland's editorial of Monday, 1 July carried a banner headline which read "Davidson bites the QSBC bullet". The newspaper stated—

> "The Queensland Government, led by its principal business minister, Bruce Davidson, has moved quickly to address a problem which for seven years has been the subject of numerous reviews, intense Cabinet deliberation, and an irritant to at least four previous ministers who have seen their own recommendations thwarted at one point or another."

An irritant to four failed Labor ministers! First we had Geoff Smith, then the current Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Jim Elder, then Warren Pitt and, finally, Ken Hayward, who all wanted to get rid of the QSBC but never had the guts or the factional support to do it. I have also received letters and public statements of support from many individuals and representatives of industry bodies and small-business groups, including the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Metal Trades Industry Association, the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association.

In accordance with our election commitment, I am also establishing the Queensland Small Business Council, which will have the role of providing advice and feedback to the Government on small-business matters. The council will have a broader charter than the QSBC board, which was only concerned with management skills. I have instructed the inaugural chair of the council, Mr Geoff Murphy of Rockhampton-based JM Kelly construction group, that the council is to provide a vehicle for small businesses of any type to have input into Government policy development. I expect all members to be appointed, and the first meeting held by September this year.

In conclusion, having been in small business myself for more than 20 years, I am committed to seeing small business succeed in this State. I am committed to giving them the best and most relevant services to help them reach their goals and aspirations. The best way to do that is not through an organisation like the Queensland Small Business Corporation. These types of corporations were designed to meet the needs of businesses in the 1980s and times have changed. There is a marked trend from State to State to streamline administration and reduce duplication of services to small business. The amendments I introduce to the House today, together with the integration of the QSBC and the establishment of the Queensland Small Business Council, will ensure that Queensland's small businesses will be well served. This Government is committed to helping small business get on with business, and these changes will achieve this goal. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Palaszczuk, adjourned.

WEAPONS AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. R. COOPER (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (11.54 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Weapons Act 1990, and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Cooper, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. R. COOPER (Crows Nest—Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Racing) (11.55 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The appalling tragedy of the Port Arthur massacre shocked the nation. It had the most profound impact as the nation sought to grapple with the awesome, almost unbelievable contemplation of such a chilling atrocity. Firstly, there was shock, horror and grief and then a firm, resolute determination that the nation's law-makers had a clear and urgent duty to respond.

It was only two and a half months ago that I attended the first special Police Ministers Conference convened by the Prime Minister in Canberra on 10 May. That APMC produced a list of 11 resolutions, and Cabinet endorsed those on the following Monday, 13 May. Thus, despite plainly untrue allegations to the contrary which have surfaced from time to time since, the Queensland Government was committed to the important principle of national uniform firearm control laws. Our commitment to that principle has never wavered. I did say from day one of the debate that it was of fundamental importance that necessary new laws be logical, workable and, above all, enforceable. I also said that it was a fundamental requirement that the legitimate interests of honest, responsible and law-abiding firearm owners be recognised and protected—be they firearm owners who own firearms as a sporting interest, as an occupational need, as a collector or for any other reasonable and justifiable purpose. I and the Queensland Government have always recognised and acknowledged that any proposals which were not reasonable and justifiable would be met with hostility and, consequently, a fair degree of non-compliance.

All Police Ministers recognised at that first meeting that there needed to be ongoing discussions and, at that level, there were two more ministerial conferences. There has also been a constant interchange of information and an ongoing debate at officer level. I would like to pay a particular tribute to those officers—both civilian and police—in the Queensland Police Service who have worked so selflessly and tirelessly to achieve this outcome. I mention in particular the Director of Administration in the Queensland Police Service, Mr Bob Carson, Sergeant Mike Crowley, Sergeant Mark Jackson and others, including Inspector John McCoomb, who is now enjoying the pursuits in Atlanta.

I also want to recognise the staff of the parliamentary draftsman. They deserve equal commendation—although a few minutes ago I could have killed them! I also thank my own staff in the Brisbane office and the Oakey electorate office. In the past two and a half months those officers have suffered enormous abuse, which I regard as an utter disgrace. Those people never once shirked their duty or walked away from the problems with which they were confronted. They never once shirked their responsibilities. I commend them for that.

Before I proceed any further, I should explain why I am introducing this Bill today. At one stage there was a proposal that only draft legislation or, in effect, a Green Paper be produced to allow further public debate. However, the Government determined that the best and most logical approach was to introduce a Bill to amend the existing Act. This course of action will allow, via what will be my considerably detailed speech, a far better and clearer explanation of what we are proposing. It is my intention that this Bill lay upon the table of the House until the Budget session in early to mid September to allow all interested parties to consider it. That course of action will ensure that the debate then will be well informed.

I wish to place on record my appreciation of the cooperative bipartisan approach offered by the Opposition and accepted by the Government. As major developments happened, I have kept the Opposition leadership briefed, with the most recent briefing being only yesterday. In this regard also, my thanks go to the honourable member for Gladstone for her ongoing interest and cooperation.

I also want to make the point that there has been the most exhaustive and, to be frank, exhausting consultation process with the widest range of stakeholder groups. I convened a meeting of such groups even before I attended the first APMC meeting on 10 May and have held extensive discussions

with advocates of all points of view since. I might also mention that in excess of some 12,000 letters and faxes have been received by my office, and I know all honourable members have received, to varying degrees of volume, letters and telephone calls from those concerned about these planned laws.

The Honourable the Premier has acknowledged rightly that this legislation is the result of trying to reconcile often diametrically opposed points of view and, therefore, is a compromise. Compromises never really satisfy all concerned who hold very firm views so, I suppose, there will be those who consider this Bill flawed or inadequate when considered from their particular fixed perspective. However, I want to assure all that it is the best possible legislation that could be achieved under the most extremely difficult circumstances.

Very significant points which I, on behalf of the Government, pursued in the legitimate interest of certain firearm owner groups were agreed to nationally in the final round of ministerial discussions. It is certainly no secret that there was unanimous agreement in favour by all Ministers at the last ministerial conference for what has been described as "remanufacture" of certain firearms to reduce the magazine capacity. This was lost ultimately after the determined intervention by the Prime Minister. I still believe—and demonstrably all APMC members believe—that this was a worthwhile and acceptable option but, nevertheless, it no longer has any life.

Now this Bill has been introduced and, given the pressure of a relatively short implementation, surrender and compensation timetable, there is an urgent need to commence a public education program to ensure that the people of Queensland are rapidly made aware of the new conditions under which firearms may be owned and used. As will be detailed later, there will be parallel education programs developed by both the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments, although the Queensland Government will again conduct special consultations with interest groups as the start point of this program.

During the term of the last Labor Government, there was a recognition that the Weapons Act 1990 needed to be improved and the Weapons Amendment Act 1994 was passed. Because of the need to finalise certain matters for regulation, some parts of the Act were not commenced in strict legislative terms. I now advise the House that this Bill, as introduced, incorporates sections which will allow those recognised needs to be met, as well as meeting these requirements of the resolutions. As such, Labor-introduced legislation will be commenced at the same time as the new requirements.

There has been much attention drawn to the resolutions produced by the Police Ministers Council on 10 May last. Despite that publicity, there has not been a clear public understanding of their contents, their implication and their status. The 11 resolutions represented the start point for a legislative basis and the focus of the commitment of all jurisdictions to develop uniform legislation. However, those resolutions did present some difficulties of translation into legislation. In fact, I would say that I believe that it would have been nothing short of a miracle to make something out of those in the first instance.

Mr Speaker, as I forewarned, my speech will be in considerable detail so that all honourable members will be able to obtain as clear a picture as possible of what the intentions of the Government are. Of necessity, much of the detail will be contained in the regulations, and this has to be acknowledged. Preliminary work on those regulations has already begun and, in many ways, that is where a great deal of the detail impacting upon firearm owners or potential future owners will be contained. I, and the Government, acknowledge that great care and sensitivity will be needed in the drafting of those regulations. However, honourable members can be assured that the main provisions of the resolutions are fully incorporated in the Bill.

The Bill is divided into four main Parts and two Schedules. These elements are as follows—

Part 1—Preliminary. This Part covers the Short Title and the commencement process.

Part 2—Amendment of Weapons Act 1990. This Part amends the Weapons Act 1990 by—

creating a replacement Part 2 of that Act to provide for a new firearms user licensing scheme;

creating a new Part 2A of that Act to provide a new Permit to Acquire system;

incorporating nationally agreed resolutions and their legislative consequences into the Act;

incorporating other recognised requirements for change stemming from previous considerations.

Part 3—Amendment of Weapons Amendment Act 1994. This Part amends the Weapons Amendment Act 1994 to reflect changes consequent upon incorporation of the resolutions and the new Schemes.

Part 4—Consequential Amendments. This Part notes amendments to other Acts where necessary.

Schedule 1—Minor Amendments. This schedule lists minor amendments limited to words or phrases.

Schedule 2—Consequential Amendments. This schedule lists detailed amendments to other Acts.

Honourable members should note that Queensland uses a Weapons Act not a Firearms Act to legislate firearms control. This means that the structure and content of the Bill differs from that of other jurisdictions, even though it pursues uniform outcomes. For example, the Bill includes in Schedule 1 two special categories, category E for special items other than firearms (protective vests, batons) and category R, which covers a wide range of restricted items, including both firearms and other weapons. In the current Weapons Act, there are four schedules of which Schedule 1 is a list of restricted firearms. Schedule 2 is registered firearms, that is, concealables. Schedule 3 is unrestricted firearms and Schedule 4 is subject matter for regulations. The Bill in Part 2 creates one schedule from the previous Schedules 1, 2 and 3. This new schedule identifies all categories of firearms.

In drafting this Bill, all of the significant requirements of the revised APMC resolutions have been placed into the main body of the Bill. Detailed administrative and specification requirements will be incorporated in new regulations. The regulations will be used to provide much needed flexibility in allowing various combinations of licence type, firearm category and the particular conditions for use of the firearm or firearms.

For ease of explanation, I propose to address each of those resolutions and outline the legislative response in this Bill.

Resolution 1—Bans on Specific Types of Firearms

Resolution 1 provides that automatic and semiautomatic centre fire rifles are limited to special occupational categories of shooters. Heavy calibre centre fire semiautomatic rifles, especially those of military pattern, have been consistently used in Queensland for the culling of large-bodied feral pests and stock eradication for domestic livestock, such as cattle. The APMC has now agreed that primary producers may be given access to category D firearms in special circumstances. There must be a demonstrated need for which only this type of rifle is suitable. There must be a geographical limitation of use and the licence will be limited to a maximum life of one year. There is provision for relicensing in the event of continuing need and the firearm must be stored in secure conditions to the satisfaction of the approving authority. When the need no longer exists, the firearm must be returned to the appropriate authority.

Provision for category D licensing is broadly covered by the Bill in respect of occupational requirements being a genuine reason in section 6(2) and section 6(3), broad licensing provisions of the Act and the proposed Schedule 1. Detailed provisions for category D licensing and the conditions which will apply to such licensing will be drafted in the new regulations.

Resolution 2—Effective Nationwide Registration of all Firearms

This resolution requires that all jurisdictions establish an integrated licence and firearms registration system and that these databases be linked through the National Exchange of Police Information (NEPI) to ensure effective nationwide registration of all firearms. The Bill provides for firearms registration in Division 3 section 24V. The registration system will record details of each firearm linked to the person's licence. This will include the calibre and action of the firearm amongst other things. It is recognised that firearm owners may possess interchangeable barrels and actions and, administratively, these will be dealt with as separate registration items. Administrative arrangements are now being made to put this requirement into effect by expanding the Weapons Licensing Branch of the Queensland Police Service, the creation of the State licence and registration database and the information system communication links to NEPI.

At the last APMC, the Commonwealth Government made what was described in the communique as a "generous" offer to State and Territory Governments to provide funding for this necessarily expanded administrative machinery. Yesterday, I wrote to the Prime Minister seeking urgent details of that offer, pointing out that the Queensland Government had reached a critical stage in its Budget planning process and needed some certainty with regard to the Police Service budget.

Resolution 3—Genuine Reason for Owning, Possessing or Using a Firearm

This resolution has had the greatest effect on the existing legislation as it specifies what genuine reasons are valid for owning, possessing and using a firearm. It specifically prohibits personal protection as a genuine reason for owning or possessing a firearm and limits possession and use of category C firearms to primary producers. I add that personal protection has never, ever been a reason for having a licence. It also requires satisfaction of a "genuine need" test, in addition to a "genuine reason" test, for licensing of category B, C, D and H firearms and provides the limitations under which firearms and ammunition collectors and museums may operate.

Section 6 of the Bill defines these reasons and, for firearm owners and potential future firearm owners, this is probably the most crucial provision. It deserves a reasonable explanation. Later in my speech I will detail the impact on collectors, which is covered by section 6(d). Of course, section 6(e) is what could be best described as a safety net provision to meet any unforeseen future legitimate need.

Section 6(a) states that sports or target shooting is a reason. Sports shooters will be required—as mentioned later in section 8(2)(a)—to prove that they are members of an approved shooting club. These clubs provide a well-organised, responsible and properly supervised environment for those involved or interested in this sport and I, and the Government, believe that no unnecessary impediment should be placed in the way of any person who wishes to pursue this interest. The APMC, of course, recognises this legitimate sporting interest. In fact, if I may refer back to section 5(4)(a), which deals with the requirement for an accredited course in safety training for future applicants under the new Act, I believe that these clubs will have a very significant role in addressing this provision.

Section 6(b) states that recreational shooting is a reason for possession of a firearm. Applicants seeking access to a firearm under this provision must have, as required by section 8(2)(b), written permission from a landowner to shoot on that landowner's land. It should be clearly understood that this licence category, which provides for a five-year licence, will allow such a recreational licence holder to shoot on other properties without requiring those landowners' specific, individual notification of the approving authority. Of course, the normal laws governing trespass do apply and such licensed persons would need to obtain at least the verbal permission of another landowner prior to shooting on that land.

Section(6)(c), as I have mentioned previously, will allow for category D firearm access for primary producers under certain specified conditions. That section allows as a reason an occupational or business requirement and, as section 8(I)(b) states, licences may be issued to a body, whether incorporated or unincorporated. Thus, business and other organisations which do have such a legitimate requirement will be able to obtain lawful access to a firearm.

There was an understandable public apprehension about the implication of this resolution in so far as personal protection was concerned. Let me assure all honourable members, as forcefully and as emphatically as I can, that the effect of this resolution does not preclude the use of a firearm for personal protection where the Criminal Code provides the relevant consideration, that is, the test of equal force. Sections 12(1) and 12(2) of this Bill specifically address this concern and cover other concerns about the lawful use of a firearm held by a licensee under any other Act.

As I have just said, the Bill specifies the "genuine reason" for possession of a firearm in section 6. It also includes the requirement for a "genuine need" for category B, C, D or H firearms in Division 2 section 24K(2)(d) while section 7(1) lists the classes of licences that may be obtained. Section 7(2) provides for determination of other reasons for possession of firearms by recourse to regulations. Should the APMC make any future agreement on expansion of firearm ownership, this Bill allows the incorporation of such an agreement under section 7(2).

Should anybody try and suggest that such a provision is inserted for any devious purpose, I draw the attention of honourable members to the communique issued after the last APMC which stated that all Ministers had agreed in principle to examine further the question of access to category C shotguns for a restricted class of clay-target shooters in order to ensure effective Australian representation in national and international events.

The revised resolutions also provided possession of heirloom firearms as a "genuine reason". Any firearm defined as an heirloom must be rendered permanently inoperable and an heirloom licence applies only to a single gun or matched pair or set. The Bill provides

for heirloom licences in section 7C and conditions which will apply will be drafted into regulations.

In respect of category C firearms, the resolutions direct that, generally, only primary producers may have access to such firearms. They may have possession only of one each of a .22 semiautomatic rifle with a maximum magazine capacity of 10 rounds and either a semiautomatic shotgun or pump action shotgun of a maximum magazine capacity of five rounds. The APMC agreed to a Queensland proposal that, on very large properties with several out-stations, more than one of each type of firearm may be held and this provision will be incorporated in the new regulations when drafted. This agreement also extended to employee use of a licensed primary producer's firearms while working on the property.

Resolution 3, in its original form, placed extreme limitations on firearms collectors and did not acknowledge the specialist category of ammunition collectors. Queensland successfully sought a revised resolution, along with some other jurisdictions, to provide for more sympathetic considerations for ammunition collectors and these are provided for in sections 50A-50C of the Bill. In respect of firearms collectors, the following outcomes have been achieved—

the 1 January 1946 inoperability date has been removed;

collectors will now be able to hold category A, B, C and H;

firearms rendered temporarily inoperable only;

firearms manufactured prior to 1900 and for which cartridge ammunition is no longer commercially available have been excluded from licensing and registration by the APMC. This is addressed in section 50C(2)(b);

rendered temporarily inoperable means removal and separate, secure storage of the bolt or firing pin or use of a trigger lock;

only category D firearms will be required to be rendered permanently inoperable to standards to be prescribed in regulations;

collections may have as few as one firearm and no upper limit will be set;

storage and security standards for collectors will be prescribed by regulations but, generally, will be no more onerous than those which currently exist;

collectors may buy, sell and trade collectable firearms as long as those transactions are between licensed collectors and are factored through a licensed gun dealer;

a firearms collector does not necessarily have to be a member of a recognised collectors' club;

generally, a collector may not use firearms held under a collector's licence and such firearms may only be used by special permit. Special permits would, for example, allow firearm use during historical re-enactments;

while a firearm collector's licence does not allow the holding of live ammunition, a firearms collector may hold ammunition under another licence category such as category A or B or ammunition collector.

For ammunition collectors, the following improvements will apply—

ammunition collectors will be specifically recognised and licensed;

there will be no restriction on the quantity of ammunition held other than that imposed by the Explosives Act and regulations;

sale, trade and exchange of ammunition is permissible between licensed collectors and dealers;

all calibres of sporting ammunition may be held live and military ammunition of United Nations Hazard Classification Code 1.4.S up to 20 millimetre calibre may be held live providing none contain any high explosive, smoke, chemical or tear-producing agent.

Resolution 4—Basic Licence Requirements

This resolution imposes basic requirements for licensing and also specifies the categories under which firearms are to be listed. It requires authorities to draw attention to security storage requirements for firearms on the licence, provides for mutual recognition of firearms licences between jurisdictions and for relocation of licensees between jurisdictions. A major element of the resolution is that it specifies conditions for the cancellation, suspension and revocation of licences. The basic requirements for licensing are included in section 5 of the Bill. For full licensing, a person must be 18 years of age. The APMC later agreed that persons may have access to firearms under supervision from an earlier age. The Bill includes provisions for a minor's licence from age 11.

There is a requirement that the person must be a fit and proper person. A person is not considered to be fit and proper if that person has had a conviction in the past five years for offences such as misuse of drugs, misuse of firearms and use or threat of violence. Another consideration is whether the person is, or has been, subject to a domestic violence order. There is a requirement for the licence to be issued for a period not exceeding five years and section 14 of the Bill includes this requirement.

There are specified requirements for details to be endorsed on the licence, such as a photograph. It should be noted that the original 10 May requirement for the licensee's address to be endorsed on the licence has been removed by agreement. The primary requirement is that the licence, the person, the firearms and the address be linked on the registration information system.

The categories of firearms and other weapons are detailed in Schedule 1 of the Bill, suspension, revocation and cancellation of licences are provided for in sections 22, 23 and 24 of the Bill and recognition of licences between jurisdictions is included in the Bill in sections 24B and 24C.

Resolution 5—Training as a Prerequisite for Licensing

The resolution determined that a first-time licensing requirement was to be the successful completion of a standard firearms safety training course and the Bill provides for this in sections 5(2)(b) and 5(4). The standard course has not yet been finalised and Queensland will have to continue to provide new licences in the interim. For this purpose, Queensland will continue to use its current safety training requirements for licensing purposes.

We have also noted the general acceptance of recognition of prior learning in determining various skills levels. Therefore, existing licence holders will be transferred to new licences where they meet all other requirements without a need for them to complete additional safety training instructions.

Resolution 6—Grounds for Licence Refusal or Cancellation and Seizure of Firearms

Sections 13, 21, 22 and 23 make provision for rejections of licence applications, surrender of licences, suspension of licences and revocation of licences. The Bill also covers the formal notice that the authorised officer must provide in these events. It should also be noted that the Bill includes provision for an appeals process in that previous appeal provisions are retained after amendment.

The resolution includes mental or physical fitness as considerations for licence refusal or cancellation. The Bill includes these considerations in section 24N(1)(b). The Bill also contains provisions for disclosures by doctors and psychologists of certain information in section 129B(1). It is my understanding that where such information is provided, the informant may advise his or her patient of the circumstances. This information does not, in itself, form the basis for a refusal to license but indicates the need for the licensing authorities to investigate further before making a licensing decision. Any applicant refused a licence has recourse to the appeals process.

Resolution 7—Permit to Acquire

The resolution requires a separate Permit to Acquire for every acquisition of a firearm and, originally, the resolution also required a 28 day waiting period for a Permit to Acquire. During this period, original licensing conditions are to be checked. Queensland has recognised that there are circumstances where the 28 day waiting period might be waived. An example of this is where a professional shooter has his or her firearm damaged and requires an immediate replacement. The APMC has agreed that authorities may waive the 28 day waiting period where there are special circumstances. Division 2 of the Bill covers Permits to Acquire, especially sections 24J to 24U.

Resolution 8—Uniform Standard for Security and Storage of Firearms

The Bill expands existing legislative requirements for secure storage as consequential amendments. Examples are sections 5(1)(c) dealing with access to secure storage facilities and 9(1)(c) dealing with inspection which will also be the subject of regulations in respect of detailed requirements. As we have seen, police breaking into people's homes and doing inspections is ruled out. It has to be by mutual agreement and all privacy laws must be observed.

Generally, the new storage requirements are not much different from Queensland's current requirements—especially for collectors. The changes should not impose any additional cost on firearm owners who currently meet legislative requirements.

The resolutions originally imposed increased levels of security for category C firearms. Queensland successfully sought agreement for category C firearms to be secured to the same level as category B and

that will be a locked receptacle of heavy weight or fixed to the building structure.

Resolution 9—Recording of Sales

This resolution requires that all purchase, sales and transfers must be transacted through a licensed dealer. The resolution does provide for local police stations to act as dealers in remote localities and these requirements are included in the Bill in sections 24E to 24I. The resolution originally required jurisdictions to place limitations on quantities of ammunition to be sold. This was recognised subsequently as being unworkable in practice and the APMC agreed not to seek imposition of limits on ammunition quantities.

Resolution 10—Mail Order Sales Control

This resolution originally limited mail order sales to those between licensed dealers and prohibited the commercial transport of ammunition with firearms. This resolution has been subsequently amended to allow local police to take the place of dealers in remote areas and also to allow commercial transport of firearms and ammunition under secure conditions. With the new requirements for all sales to be factored through a licensed dealer, there is no requirement for specific mention of mail order sales. It should be noted that an administrative process will need to be created where the valid licence status of a mail order purchaser is initially established and this will be done either by the licensed dealer or by local police. This status can then be used for further mail order purchases.

Resolution 11—Compensation/Incentives Issues

This resolution provides for proper and fair compensation to be provided on a common basis and it also requires a public education campaign for which the Commonwealth will make a financial contribution. It also requires the establishment of a 12 month amnesty period. The Bill makes provision for a compensation and amnesty process in section 154 although the Bill does not include details of the proposed approach to compensation. However, because of the public interest in this matter, I wish to advise—

compensation is a matter for the Commonwealth to fund;

compensation will be based on March 1996 values to ensure the negative effects of the new firearms controls do not unfairly reduce firearm values for those firearms which will attract compensation;

compensation will be paid to owners in respect of prohibited firearms and unique accessories only, that is, category C and D firearms—category A, B and H firearms may be sold to dealers where owners cannot, or choose not, to retain ownership, and we know how much they will get for them;

compensation will be based on a common price list covering all known category C and D firearms in both new and used conditions.

This list is divided into firearms of up to a $2,500 value and of over a $2,500 value. For firearms valued under $2,500, the offered prices have been judged to be more than adequate by independent observers. Above $2,500 where the offered price is disputed or the specific firearm is not listed, the owner may submit the firearm to an appointed arbitrator for valuation. In this case, the owner has to pay any costs of valuation and this cost will not be compensated. The arbitrated value is the only one that will then be accepted, even if it is lower than the list price and there will be no appeal against the arbitration process.

Firearms dealers will be compensated for loss of business attributable to the new firearms control situation and compensation will be available to any dealer whose business includes the sale, repair or importation of firearms. The dealer should determine the value of lost business through a certified valuation conducted by an appropriately qualified professional person according to commercially acceptable standards and the cost of valuation is compensable and should be included in the claim. The amnesty period is to start on 30 September 1996 and run for 12 months. This resolution also provided for a public education campaign. The Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments are preparing a coordinated approach to this campaign and this nationwide approach will be supported with supporting programs in each jurisdiction.

The provisions I have outlined address specifically the resolutions. There are a number of other matters, however, which need to be mentioned. A key provision of the coalition's pre-election policy was the establishment of a Firearms Advisory Council and this is contained in section 129A(1) of the Bill. The Government is committed to ensuring an ongoing consultative approach and this provision formalises and acknowledges that. It is our intention that this council be a truly representative body which can monitor the new laws and provide ongoing advice to the Minister and the Government.

Another key coalition pre-election policy was the establishment of a Prohibited Persons

Register to allow identification of those who should be prevented from legally accessing firearms. While I have mentioned previously sections which address, in effect, this policy commitment, I believe it is important to draw them together. This Bill will achieve the objective by virtue of the interlinked information systems for licence and registration information. The State database on individuals and licensees will include persons who have circumstances which prevent issue of a licence or which require further investigation. Not only will the State develop this database, but Queensland will also have access to similar information generated by other jurisdictions.

It should also be noted that the Bill requires in section 9(1) that, before an application is decided, the relevant officer must be satisfied about the applicant's physical and mental health. Section 129B allows doctors or psychologists to inform the Commissioner of Police that they have concerns about the suitability of a patient to possess a firearm and, importantly for those professions, that section provides that the giving of such information does not give rise to any criminal or civil action or remedy.

Section 5(2)(e) of the Bill also requires that an applicant be a "fit and proper person to hold a licence" while sections 5(5) and 5(6) detail who is not a "fit and proper person". I have previously outlined those sections.

The sale of ammunition components and accessories is also deserving of mention. Some firearm owners reload ammunition and, consequently, purchase ammunition components such as cases, primers and bulk powder and bullets. They also purchase a range of reloading equipment. Ammunition components fall under the same definition as ammunition and a purchaser will have to present a valid firearms licence to support the purchase. The appropriate section of the Bill is 24(I). There is no legislative restriction on the purchase of reloading equipment.

Replica firearms and, particularly, hand guns are not of themselves licensable. To do so would impose enormous practicable and administrative difficulties in distinguishing them from toys. However, a replica firearm is covered by this legislation if it is used in a threatening or violent manner or is held out in public to be a real firearm. These situations constitute offences under the current Act and will continue to do so under amended legislation.

While it is to be sincerely hoped that those owning or wishing to own a firearm will comply with the law, nevertheless there have to be penalties for non-compliance. There are a range of penalties under the Bill and I draw the attention of all honourable members to some of them. Under section 24E(1), contravention of a condition of licence has a maximum penalty of 60 units—currently a maximum of $4,500—or one year's imprisonment. An additional penalty of revocation of the licence or seizure of the firearm may also be imposed for this offence.

Under section 24F(1), illegal possession for category D, H or R firearms attracts a maximum penalty of 100 penalty units—currently $7,500—or two years' imprisonment; for category C and E firearms, a maximum penalty of 60 penalty units—currently $4,500—or one year's imprisonment; and for category A firearms, a maximum of 20 penalty units—currently $1,500—or six months' imprisonment.

The Bill also provides for similar penalties for the illegal sale of these categories of weapons. Section 24H deals with the sale of ammunition, while section 24I deals with the purchase of ammunition. Again the penalties under both for any conviction are similar—a maximum fine of 60 penalty units or, currently, $4,500. There is a range of other penalties for minor breaches outlined in the Bill.

Honourable members will recall that under section 8(1)(2)(b), a reason for an application for a licence is recreational shooting if the applicant can produce written permission from a landowner—as defined under the Bill—authorising the applicant to shoot on the landowner's land. Section 143A in the Bill provides that a landowner does not incur any liability merely because he or she provides that written permission. Part 7 of the Bill is what could be broadly called the housekeeping provisions and lays out the necessary transitional arrangements.

One key element is section 151. This acknowledges that any person who lawfully possesses a firearm under an existing licence or who, on or before 30 September 1997, applies for a licence under the new Act is taken to have an adequate knowledge of safety practices. Section 153 deals with transitional arrangements for appeals and, in this matter, it should be noted that section 122 of the existing Act dealing with appeals remains without amendment.

There are two other matters deserving of mention. The amnesty provided under this Bill will allow the owners of prohibited firearms to retain legal ownership until the amnesty period expires on 30 September 1997, although they

will not be permitted to use them. The question of privacy rights has also been raised with me and I wish to assure those concerned with this aspect that I will be taking a very close interest in ensuring, as far as is humanly possible, that these rights are protected under this legislation.

I also intend to request the Queensland Police Service to establish an information hotline as soon as possible to provide a contact point for firearm owners, potential firearm owners and others who have questions about the effects of this legislation. I will be making an appropriate announcement about this initiative in due course.

This Bill is a very significant achievement considering that, on some key issues, final agreement was only reached at the last APMC on 17 July—one week ago. My Cabinet colleagues and the coalition back bench have all made contributions, and I thank them also. In making these acknowledgments, I do not for one moment seek to suggest that this contentious and divisive issue has not caused considerable heartache for all involved and that, on all sides, there are not any reservations or criticisms. It is admittedly a compromise but, I do believe, a compromise which preserves important principles and which delivers important outcomes. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Barton, adjourned.

CIVIL AVIATION (CARRIERS' LIABILITY) AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. V. G. JOHNSON (Gregory—Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (12.33 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Civil Aviation (Carriers' Liability) Act 1964."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Johnson, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. V. G. JOHNSON (Gregory—Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (12.34 p.m.): I move—

> "That the Bill be now read a second time."

The Bill before the House will amend the Queensland Civil Aviation (Carriers' Liability) Act 1964 to ensure that it is compulsory for intrastate charter and/or regular public transport air service operators to have liability insurance cover for passengers in the event of death or injury arising from an accident.

The issue of adequacy of air service operators liability insurance arose following the Monarch Airlines crash at Young in New South Wales. Because the flight was intrastate, the operator—Monarch—was subject to New South Wales legislation which allowed for the insurer to deny liability as a result of alleged breaches in safety regulations. There is a similar provision in the existing Queensland Act which insurers could possibly invoke.

In response, the Commonwealth enacted the Transport Legislation Amendment Act (No. 2) 1995 which amended the Commonwealth Civil Aviation (Carriers' Liability) Act 1959 requiring air service operators to have mandatory non-voidable liability insurance cover for passengers in aircraft.

The Commonwealth legislation covers interstate air services and air services between Australia and another country but has no application to intrastate air services. Through the Australian Transport Council, all States have agreed to adopt complementary legislation to the Commonwealth to cover intrastate air services. The intent of the States and the Commonwealth is to have complementary legislation in place by 1 September 1996. This Bill before the House is Queensland's legislative response to this important matter.

The Government believes that passengers' rights should be protected and that they should receive compensation due to them under the Act. Currently, passenger liability insurance policies typically contain exclusion clauses which specify circumstances in which an insurer may avoid payment to the air service operator. This raises the possibility that passengers injured or killed whilst being carried under the existing Act, or their entitled relatives, may receive no compensation if, in the absence of insurance, an aircraft operator does not have sufficient alternative funds or assets to meet its liabilities.

Accordingly, the Bill will ensure the following protection is afforded to intrastate air passengers—

- intrastate air service operators must compulsorily insure each passenger carried to the minimum amount of $500,000 (up from an existing $180,000);

- payment of a passenger's claim in the case of death or injury is not to be contingent upon the financial condition or solvency of the air service operator, nor is it to be affected by air service operators' failure to comply with safety related requirements imposed by the Commonwealth Civil Aviation (Carriers' Liability) Act 1959 or any other relevant law;
- intrastate air service operators are guilty of an offence if they carry passengers for hire or reward without appropriate liability insurance cover; and
- intrastate air service operators must provide evidence to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) that appropriate liability insurance has been issued.

The compliance function of this amendment Bill is to be delegated to the Civil Aviation Safety Authority. All States and the Commonwealth have met with the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and agreed in principle that the Civil Aviation Safety Authority, as the specialist air safety body, is best placed through its responsibilities in issuing air operators' certificates to administer insurance declarations for air service operators resulting from this amendment Bill. Similarly, delegations will be established to give the Civil Aviation Safety Authority the power to apply for an injunction to prevent an aircraft conducting passenger flights if it is believed that the air service operator does not hold the appropriate insurance.

In the unfortunate event of an aircraft accident, the actual amount of compensation to be paid to the plaintiffs in the settlement of claims will continue to be determined on the same basis as currently applies, namely, by negotiation between the affected parties or as determined by a court in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

It is recognised that there will be increased insurance premiums for air service operators. The Australian Aviation Underwriters Pool, which insures the majority of air service operators, has advised that the increase in passenger liability cover from $180,000 to $500,000 will increase premiums on average from the existing $250 to $728 per passenger seat on an aircraft.

This should not represent a significant increase in the total costs of an air service operator. Many operators in Queensland are in the scope of the Commonwealth legislation since they have interstate charters or operations and hence will already have the appropriate insurance cover. Notwithstanding, the benefits to be afforded intrastate air travellers in Queensland as a result of this Bill are considered to outweigh the cost increases which may accrue to the industry.

The amendment Bill does have provision for the State to retain its ability to make laws divergent from the same Commonwealth legislation should the cost of compliance to industry be considered excessive at some future time. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Elder, adjourned.

SUGAR INDUSTRY AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 July (see p. 1771).

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay) (12.41 p.m.), continuing: I would like to recap on the matters I was discussing before the debate was adjourned. As I said yesterday, the success of the 1991 sugar legislation can be gauged by the rate of expansion undertaken by the Mackay canegrowers. In 1991, there were 103,000 hectares or 4 million tonnes of cane under production, producing approximately 500,000 tonnes of raw sugar. In 1995, there were 113,000 hectares of cane under production, producing 8.3 million tonnes of cane production, generating a revenue of $450m. Not only did expansion occur in the raw sugar market but also two sugar companies invested heavily in value adding of the product. Mackay Sugar Co-op and its grower shareholders, in partnership with E. D. and F. Mann, built a refinery at Racecourse mill, where 350,000 tonnes of refined sugar is produced annually. CSR at Plane Creek has invested heavily in technology to produce a very low-colour product. Both companies by their investment have shown great faith in the industry.

I want now to make some more specific points regarding the Bill itself. Many of the amendments contained in the Sugar Industry Amendment Bill regarding negotiation and dispute resolution were the result of an agreement negotiated in 1994 by the former Labor Primary Industries Minister, the Honourable Ed Casey. Recently, Ed Casey told me that back in 1994 no agreement could be reached over the division of sugar moneys until, in Ed's words, he banged a few heads together, which resulted in an extra 40c per tonne to the grower. This agreement broke the thinking of the old central board, which operated on the philosophy that what was good for Bundaberg was good for Mossman.

The old thinking did not take into account that savings in costs achieved in one mill area through productivity improvements both at the milling and farming levels should be passed on at a local level and shared equally.

One of the important changes in this Bill is the definition of "sugar". From the original section 110 of the Act we omit the words "raw sugar" to be replaced with the general term "sugar". This is an important change in the acquisition of sugar by corporations. My concern is that it significantly changes the power of the corporation and will give the corporation wider acquisition powers. Concerns that I have held with respect to this were adequately explained in discussions I had with the Australian Milling Council.

The issue of acquisition and single desk selling is one of the major issues confronting the industry, along with the tariff on raw and refined sugar. These and other issues are currently being addressed by the industry's review working party and in consideration of the National Competition Policy, which was endorsed by this Parliament during the sitting held on Wednesday, 10 July. Under the current arrangement, raw sugar producers who are also refiners are penalised for value adding. On one hand we tell operators in the industry that they have to be efficient and value add, but on the other hand we put up barriers which restrict their full potential.

Mackay Sugar and its partner E. D. and F. Mann in Mackay Refined Sugar is a good case in point. Mackay Refined Sugar, which commenced production of white sugar in 1994, selling it to the domestic Australian market and exporting to New Zealand and East Asia, is engaged in a fierce competition to obtain its market share. Removing the legislative barriers under which Mackay Refined Sugar buys back raw sugar from the Queensland Sugar Corporation at a cost based on the national import parity price would provide significant savings and allow Mackay Refined Sugar to reach its full potential. This in the end will be determined by both the Federal and State Governments early next year, after the working party completes its final report in late November. It is hoped that a satisfactory outcome will be achieved for all stakeholders which will allow the industry more flexibility so that it may anticipate the ever-changing world market. An interesting point to note about the competition between the white sugar producers is that the cheaper prices obtained by the manufacturers have not necessarily translated into cheaper prices for the consumer. This appears to be at odds with the principles of National Competition Policy. Perhaps penalties should apply if savings are not passed on to the consumer.

Another aspect of the Bill about which I would like to make some comment relates to the composition of, the remuneration paid to and the appointments made to negotiating teams. I believe that an appointment to the negotiating team for a period of up to one year is too short in time and that the appointment should be for a period of up to two years, as is the case with mill supplier committees. I do not think it is in the best interests of the industry for a member of the negotiating team to be replaced halfway through negotiations, which could occur under appointments for up to one year.

The establishment of a negotiating team will no doubt increase the workload on growers' and millers' representatives, and therefore there is a need for a remuneration to be paid for the time spent during negotiation. However, to prevent a party who may not receive or not be entitled to remuneration from calling unnecessary meetings, there is a need to establish a set meeting fee throughout the State. Unnecessary meetings would create a burden on individual growers, and could be used to force a party into accepting an unsatisfactory outcome. Establishing a set meeting fee throughout the State would go some way to ensuring that meetings do not get out of hand.

I also believe that the clause relating to the appointment of a proxy to attend a negotiating team meeting is inadequate. The definition of a quorum for the negotiating team is all members of the team. However, a proxy can be appointed if a member fails to attend. In other words, if a member fails to attend a meeting, in theory one could appoint the tea lady to take the position of the absent member. I believe that the Minister should clarify that clause.

The Minister in his second-reading speech said that the Bill catered for the establishment of new mills. I noticed in the section of the Bill pertaining to new mills that there is no reference to the Minister referring the establishment of a new mill to the Industry Policy Council. Is the Minister signalling his intentions to rid the industry of the policy council? If this is his intention, with what does he propose to replace the policy council? What would be the composition of this body, and when is this likely to take effect?

Could the Minister explain how the industry would handle a situation in which growers were dissatisfied with the performance of a miller and wanted to establish a

cooperative mill? To what body would an issue such as this be referred for resolution? There have been rumblings amongst some canegrowers about some mills not being able to handle the expansion. They have indicated that they would like to set up a cooperative mill. I wonder how the industry would deal with such an issue.

Although this Bill caters for the establishment of new mills, it does not cater for the establishment of new bulk sugar terminals. The Bill details where the bulk sugar terminals are located. However, I believe that the Bill is deficient. With the increase in raw sugar production through expansion, at some time in the future the Queensland Sugar Corporation may want to establish bulk sugar handling facilities in China or some other offshore location. Provision should be made for the future expansion of bulk sugar terminals.

While consulting with stakeholders, such as Mackay Sugar, Mackay Canegrowers, the Queensland Cane Growers Council and the Australian Milling Council about the merits of the Sugar Industry Amendment Bill, which they all support, I was struck by the enormous respect and gratefulness the industry has for the valuable contributions made by the former Labor Primary Industries Minister, the Honourable Ed Casey. Those leaders were glowing in their praise of the contributions Edmund made to the industry over the six years that he was the Primary Industries Minister.

Mrs WILSON (Mulgrave) (12.53 p.m.): In supporting the amending Bill, I must say that I am aware that both canegrowers and sugar millers in the north are taking a very keen interest in this Bill, particularly the parts that will cater for and facilitate the establishment of the new mills. As honourable members would know, Tate and Lyle is well down the track of planning for a new mill on the Atherton Tableland. This will be the first new mill built in Queensland for 72 years. This provides a tremendous opportunity for the sugar industry—and north Queensland—to expand.

The Government regards the growth of the sugar industry on the tableland as vital for regional economic development, particularly since the anti-industry policies of the Labor Party have destroyed the region's once-thriving tobacco and timber industries. There is a need to find some other product on the tableland. However, I know that the changes which a new mill brings will present challenges for some people. Some concerns are being voiced within the industry that the coastal mills which, over the years, have virtually put the north on the map will see extreme difficulties with the establishment of a new mill on the tableland. I must point out that, over the last few years, we have seen the closure of two mills in that area.

In recent years, the Atherton Tableland has produced over 300,000 tonnes of cane, the majority of which was transported to the Mossman mill for crushing. This year, some 350,000 tonnes will be grown for Mossman. The Mossman mill relies on this cane to achieve economies of size in crushing and long-term viability. The Mossman mill has spent around $10m on mill expansion to crush this cane from the tableland. Growers and millers have expressed concern that, with the onset of a new mill, a loss of tonnage from the tableland will put the mill at economic risk. Land expansion and infrastructure are very much needed for ongoing viability for Mossman as a cooperative mill. I understand that the Mossman mill board is currently in negotiation with the relevant Ministers to look at opening up potential new areas for cane production. Should these negotiations prove successful, the industry will surge ahead in the north.

In my own electorate of Mulgrave the long-term viability of the Mulgrave Central Mill is under great threat from urban encroachment. The southern urban expansion is experiencing rapid growth. In fact, it is one of the highest areas of growth in this State. The RPAC 2010 document has identified cane land west of the highway as urban development corridor. This causes concern for the Mulgrave Central Mill. To compensate for this loss of cane land due to urban development, the Mulgrave mill sources some cane from the tableland. It intends to expand the quantities of cane sourced from the tableland over time to up to 300,000 tonnes per year.

It concerns me greatly that the building of a new mill on the tableland by Tate and Lyle has seriously jeopardised Mulgrave mill's long-term strategy for survival. How will it now compensate for the cane lands being lost to housing development? Canegrowers and millers have spent millions of dollars on the industry in the Mulgrave electorate, and the mill has put much financial support back into the community. Many local families have a generational history of employment at the Mulgrave Central Mill and, of course, they are concerned about their ongoing employment.

With plans for a new Tate and Lyle mill well advanced, I believe it is imperative that the Government commits to new infrastructure which will enable not only enough cane to be grown to supply the new mill but also up to 300,000 tonnes that Mulgrave needs to secure its long-term viability. Furthermore, I am told that Tate and Lyle has been holding one-to-one meetings with growers who supply the South Johnstone mill. These meetings and the interest that South Johnstone growers are showing in either applying for new assignments or perhaps transferring assignments from South Johnstone to the Tate and Lyle mill are of grave concern to the directors of South Johnstone, myself and other coalition members in the region. Over the last couple of years, South Johnstone mill has put considerable sums of money into the preparation of extra crushing from the tableland. Road infrastructure costs on Henderson Drive have been spent in support of extra traffic coming down from the tableland to the mill.

The implications of the planned new Tate and Lyle mill spread even further. Concerns have been expressed to me about the future of the Cairns bulk sugar terminal under the Tate and Lyle plan. As I understand it, the new mill will crush cane into syrup which will be transported by rail to Babinda and off-loaded there for transport south to the Mourilyan mill to be processed into crystal sugar. The Cairns Port Authority will no longer have the same sugar throughput. This, of course, could impact on its long-term viability. Discussions with stakeholders are currently under way. Furthermore, transportation of the syrup will put extra pressure on the road infrastructure. In summary, growers, millers and those in the north believe that the Tate and Lyle plans to build a new mill on the Atherton Tableland are becoming a bigger issue and taking on more significant proportions. The mills feel threatened.

A further concern is that the Bill provides for the implementation of local area negotiation and dispute resolution procedures to be used by millers and assignment holders throughout the sugar industry to determine on a commercial basis the distribution of the proceeds of vested sugar and other contractual matters relating to the supply of sugarcane. That has been brought to my attention. There are grave concerns about that. However, I believe that, with a coalition Government in power in this State, the Queensland sugar industry will be given every opportunity to work through these issues and concerns in a pro-active manner with a Government which understands and is willing to find solutions. I am confident that the growers and millers of the north will meet the challenges and the industry will emerge stronger than ever before. I commend the Minister for introducing these amendments to the Parliament.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (2.30 p.m.): I rise this afternoon to support this Bill and also to show my support for the sugar industry, that great industry that is the glue that holds coastal Queensland together, not just the many small towns but also our larger provincial centres. Without the sugar industry's development late last century and continued development through to this year, Queensland would be a very different place from what it is today.

Of course, as industries have changed—not just within this country but worldwide—the sugar industry is also changing and needing to change to meet the challenges that it faces. Very great changes have occurred in our industry. Even in the period since I started working in the industry as a 15-year-old apprentice—that was a few years back—massive changes have occurred in the industry in our State and nation. We had the security of long-term markets, assignments and cane prices boards and the industry was very much one that knew where it was going in terms of its markets and the way the assignments were mapped out. One could not grow cane on one extra metre of land. Of course, market forces worldwide have forced the industry to confront change.

My observation of and involvement with the industry has continued not just as an employee in the industry for almost 10 years but also during the entire time that I was a union official and had direct involvement with the industry. Now I am very proud to represent an electorate of which a significant part is linked to cane growing. Although my electorate does not have a sugar mill, there is a sugar mill nearby. I hazard to guess that most of the employees of that mill would live in my electorate of Waterford or have a very close association with it. It is essential for my electorate—and elsewhere in this State—that the sugar industry continue to meet the challenge of change and continue to meet it in the way that it has done.

Although the mill that is adjacent to my electorate is the smallest sugar mill in the State, the operators of the W. H. Heck and Sons Rocky Point Mill are good corporate

citizens of the district that I represent. They involve themselves in a wide range of community activity. That sugar mill generates much of the wealth that comes into the Beenleigh district. As the existing mill is the smallest mill in the State, it is not likely that my region will see a new sugar mill as provided for in this legislation. However, that mill is a very efficient producer. Despite the urban pressures being suffered by that mill, the size of the crop that it is accommodating and crushing each year is continuing to grow. The management is very innovative and it has an innovative team. They have already thought through some of the changes that are provided for in this Bill.

They are into value adding. Several years ago, they constructed a distillery. As a result, they had to consider innovative marketing and changes to marketing. In fact, they are considering other methods of value adding. They are very open minded about the fact that the marketing arrangements may change. They see themselves as being in a position to take advantage of those changes to marketing arrangements if they happen in the future. Those changes are not foreshadowed in this Bill; a single desk sale procedure will continue.

As a result of my interest in the industry, I have also looked at the recent changes in the industry during a number of trips that I have made to north Queensland and other parts of southern Queensland, particularly the Atherton Tableland area, which features largely in this legislation. Some three years ago, in company with some of the sugar milling people from my electorate and the management of Mossman central mill, I first looked at the cane areas on the Atherton Tableland. At that stage, they were growing in that area some 330,000 tonnes of cane that were being transported to Mossman mill. Improvements have been made to the transport systems and to the road through Julatten to enable the transportation of that crop to Mossman. Of course, as has already been said by other speakers today, those crops are a very important part of the future of the Mossman sugar mill. It is the core crop that will allow a new mill to be constructed on the Atherton Tableland. In turn, Mossman sugar mill will have to make other arrangements that I am aware they have in mind for adding to their crop.

Some people on both sides of the Chamber might be surprised to hear that I had several discussions with George Quaid about the other expansion lands that may be available on the Atherton Tableland to replace the crop that would go to the sugar mill for Mossman. George Quaid was very interested in terms of other land-holdings that he had in the northern part of the Atherton Tableland that may be able to be turned over to sugarcane production to supply to Mossman sugar mill as the existing lands continue to grow cane, along with the development of new canegrowing lands on the Atherton Tableland.

When I toured the Atherton Tableland canegrowing areas, I found the size of the crop and its sugar content surprising. It is well known that, if growers have sunshine and water for the cane, they can grow very large crops. When I visited that area, they were growing varieties that had been proven in the Burdekin. Of course, the Atherton Tableland is not the Burdekin—except that it has lots of sunshine, lots of water and good land. In fact, they were getting a better c.c.s. than equivalent crops in the Burdekin were achieving. I believe that that occurred because the Atherton Tableland has those nice cold snaps and cold snaps help to increase the sugar content of the sugar cane. Those growers were very confident that, over time, as research is conducted into varieties and new varieties are developed for the Atherton Tableland, they may be able to surpass the Burdekin in terms of the quality of the cane group and the sugar content of it.

Last year, while I was in north Queensland working in my role as the then Environment Minister, I took the opportunity to drop into South Johnstone sugar mill and have a talk to some of my old work mates with whom I had worked in the Lower Burdekin area as far back as the 1960s, and to look at the transport techniques that they were putting into place for transporting the part of the crop from the Atherton Tableland that currently goes to South Johnstone sugar mill. Certainly, some innovation has been taking place, which is very important. Again I am aware that, with the new crop, alternative crop areas might also have to be found for mills such as South Johnstone. Knowing the management team and the work force at that mill, I am sure that they also will be up to the challenge of establishing those new crops.

Of course, I have a large interest in the Lower Burdekin because that is where I came from and spent a very large proportion of my life. I worked in the sugar industry in that area. On some three or four occasions over the past three or four years I have been to look at the new cane land areas. The best way to describe that area is to say that it was a bit like the wild west. I remember when I first looked at the new cane lands in the Jardine area, the Burdekin River irrigation area, across from Giru

and the Invicta sugar mill up to the up-river area of the Burdekin near Clare, Millaroo and Dalbeg. Twenty-five years ago, I would not have believed possible the size of the current crops in that region and the tonnages going to the Invicta sugar mill. The Invicta sugar mill was originally the Houghton Sugar Co. It was taken over by the Australian Estates Company, which was taken over by CSR within several years. The old Invicta sugar mill was a tiny, little, archaic mill with five foot six rollers with vertical Rust and Hornsby engines in its power station. Basically it was an operating museum, even in terms of the remainder of the sugar industry in this State.

Today, Invicta is the second-largest mill and it is destined to be the largest. It has the latest technology. From my observations during several visits over the past few years, it appears to have good environmental standards. When one sees that level of development, one can only wonder what might be the future not only in the Lower Burdekin but also in areas such as the Atherton Tableland where they have large amounts of good agricultural land and a water capacity to provide for those crops.

So it is important that we have legislation that allows the industry to meet those changing circumstances that it now has to face. Historically, cane crops, prices and assignment areas were battlegrounds between the growers and the millers—nearly as bad as some of the battlegrounds between some of the millers and the trade union movement when I was an official. However, there is now a changing environment, similar to the changing environment that has occurred in industrial relations. This legislation provides room for negotiation between the growers and the millers for new mills to open and, of course, as has been mentioned, the mill on the Atherton Tableland will be the first one to open. It is very important that we have this legislation in place so that the parties can work it out for themselves.

The rationalisation of the industry has not all been one way. During the time that I have been associated with the industry, three sugar mills have closed: Goondi near Innisfail, Hambledon near Cairns and, of course, Qunaba in the Bundaberg area. Those mills have closed as part of the rationalisation of the industry. So it is good that at least one new sugar mill will come on line. We are also seeing dramatic changes occurring in the growing areas—the technology that is being used in cane growing and the technology that is used in these expanded sugar mills.

It is very important that management be up to standard because international market pressures have forced change in the sugar industry. Countries such as Thailand have moved into sugar growing at a rapid rate, and Iran is using the latest technology. My advice is that Iran is not as yet using that technology in the most efficient manner because it has not yet caught up with the management techniques that we have in Australia. Also, for the first time the trial mill at the Ord River has begun to crush cane. Because CSR is involved in that operation at the Ord River, that is another new cane-growing area that will improve Australia's market share, and it will do it very well. However, it is important that we in this State operate the industry well to make sure that the sugar industry not only survives but also prospers and takes advantage of the opportunities that exist.

I repeat, the industry is the glue that holds together our entire east coast from Beenleigh to Mossman. If many of the jobs and much of the wealth that the sugar industry generates for those small towns along the coast were to be lost, then Queensland would be a much poorer place. I will leave it at that. I support the Bill. I think that it is very important that this Parliament continues to show its support for this industry that is so important to our State.

Mr MALONE (Mirani) (2.43 p.m.): I rise with pleasure to support the Sugar Industry Amendment Bill. I also support the comments of some members who have spoken to this Bill, particularly the member for Mulgrave, who spoke about the difficulties that will occur in the future in regard to the disposition of sugar cane between the northern mills. I think that it is imperative for the Government to make sure that the mills at Mossman, Mulgrave and South Johnstone are not placed in a difficult position by the construction of a new mill on the tableland. Those things can be worked out with rational discussion and certainly with the allocation of extra land, particularly to the sugar mill at Mossman, which is relying quite heavily on the importation of cane from the tableland to make its operations large enough to be economically viable in the long term.

The objective of the Bill is to amend the Sugar Industry Act 1991. The reason for that is to cater for the establishment of a new mill. That new mill on the tablelands may not be the only mill that has to be built in the next few years. Over the past four or five years, the expansion that has occurred in areas around Mackay and to the north of Mackay has far outstripped Queensland's milling capacity. Those milling organisations increased their throughput by about 33 per cent by changing

their operations to seven days a week. Consequently, they were able to overcome their shortcomings fairly early.

However, very innovative and forward-thinking farmers are bringing huge areas of land into production—and I must stress at a huge cost—and the milling capacity is running very close to the line. Unfortunately, that is impacting on the average farmer as the season length extends to uneconomical time constraints. It has always been a well-known theory—certainly on the tropical coast—that once farmers start to crush after 21 weeks or 22 weeks from mid June until mid November, the economics of growing cane becomes very marginal. There seems to be a push, particularly as a result of the report of the Boston consulting group, that there may be some opportunities for the sugar industry to maximise its potential by increasing the season length. I say here and now that I think it is incredible that we can even entertain such a proposal. I know that we need to talk about parameters and the cost of building infrastructure to cover the increased crushing capacity. However, I think all farmers are realistic enough to understand that we are in the game to make sugar and if we are going to crush cane at a very low c.c.s. level, it makes us look at options other than making sugar out of cane. Maybe the alternative would be to look at making other products out of crushing cane at times when the c.c.s.—the sugar content—is at a very low level. That would certainly overcome the short-term problems of the crushing capacities of the mills.

As an export industry, we have to make sure that we keep our eye on the ball and ensure that we are able to compete on the world market. Unfortunately, over the past three years the trend has been for the world market to move slightly downwards ever so slowly simply because the consumption of sugar is not meeting the production of sugar. We are now in a situation in the world market in which at any one time we have about 500,000 tonnes of sugar in excess of world consumption. That is really having an adverse effect on the world price of sugar. Of course, that impacts directly—at least in Australia—on a farmer's income. Of all the sugar-producing countries, Australia is one of very few countries that prices its domestic price on the world market price. So the world market price has a very detrimental effect right back to the farm gate.

The Bill will also implement the recommendations contained in the Local Area Negotiation and Dispute Resolution report, which is dated 11 November 1994, and which was given to the Minister for Primary Industries. It recommended procedures to be used by millers and assignment holders throughout the sugar industry to determine on a commercial basis the distribution of sugar moneys and other contractual matters relating to the supply of sugar cane. Honourable members, particularly those who are involved in the sugar industry, would recollect the heartache that was caused during that very long case in relation to the proceeds of vested sugar. That really meant the split up of funding between the millers and the growers.

The Bill also provides a facility to allow the smooth transition of bulk sugar terminal operations from the bulk sugar terminal organisations to the Queensland Sugar Corporation. That process has been going on for four years or five years. When I was head of the Australian Canefarmers Association, in conjunction with members of other industry organisations, we were endeavouring to progress that matter with the Government of the day and in that regard we were having very little success. I must say that recent negotiations have been very productive and I believe that that particular problem will be overcome in a very short period.

The Bill also allows for the exclusive power to control, manage, operate and maintain bulk sugar terminal facilities by the Queensland Sugar Corporation. Of course, that is part and parcel of the single desk seller that the farmers, organisations and businesses within our sugar industry communities are very keen to maintain. The single desk seller is a very important aspect of the sugar industry. We can gain considerably from the fact that the corporation is the sole seller at the world market price and it competes very effectively with other industries around the world which have much lower input costs than Australian producers have.

Of course, the Bill also provides for the establishment of a new mill by regulation. It allows the Minister to determine that the people establishing the new mill have a demonstrated commitment and that satisfactory arrangements can be made with local farmers for the supply of cane.

I would take up a point with the Opposition spokesman on Primary Industries, the member for Inala, in relation to the infrastructure package, and I acknowledge that he has only recently attained that position. The honourable member mentioned a figure of $70m in relation to the infrastructure package. That figure really

comprises a $19m commitment by the State Government and a $19m commitment by the Federal Government, totalling $40m in round figures. From that infrastructure package a commitment was given to develop projects or infrastructure worth approximately $120m. I would like to highlight some of the projects that were established, because I think it was a good initiative.

Mr Palaszczuk: Do you recognise the effectiveness of that program?

Mr MALONE: I certainly do, but the honourable member also has to recognise that the package was a compensation package to the industry for the winding down of the tariff. It was a compensation to the established industry to allow new farmers into the industry. It was not actually a gift as such, as a lot of people would like to think it was. It was really a compensation package to establish the industry on a free-ranging style of legislation.

By the same token, I believe that those types of initiatives and incentives are well structured and they can continue in the future to allow the industry to become more self-motivated and to make sure that necessary infrastructure is in place. That is happening right across-the-board with water structure works, dams and so on. For example, the Mackay sugar industry contributed fairly substantially to the building of the Teemburra Dam.

Returning to the infrastructure package—the Russell Mulgrave Water Management scheme was implemented through that package. I will quickly run through the others. They are: the Murray Valley Infrastructure/Riversdale Water Management scheme at Tully; the Herbert Water Management and Expansion project at Ingham; the Klondyke-Lilliesmere Irrigation project in the Burdekin; the Sandy Creek Irrigation project in the Burdekin; the Teemburra Dam in the Mackay district; and the Small Weirs Irrigation project in the Mackay district, which actually built some small weirs on some of the smaller streams around the Mackay district to ensure that farmers in those areas got water. The project that I am very familiar with is the $20m Plan Creek Southern Cane Railway Extension, which received $5m from the infrastructure program. That project extended the tram line from Koumala to Carmila and accessed approximately 1,500 hectares of new land which is coming on stream slowly, but certainly very effectively, through that project. The Walla Weir on the Burnett River is, I believe, almost ready to go ahead. There is also the Avondale Irrigation scheme in Bundaberg and the Eli Creek Effluent Irrigation project at Hervey Bay, which of course provides a means for getting our grey water back into the irrigation system. I strongly support those types of projects and I think we should implement more of them.

The industry has to be very aware of the fact that there is a pressure on it to produce at a very low cost while being very efficient. We have to compete with some of the biggest competitors in the world, and those competitors have very low cost inputs and access to huge markets which are not readily accessible to us. The industry is doing a great job in that respect, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Mr CAMPBELL (Bundaberg) (2.55 p.m.): Madam Deputy Speaker——

Mr Palaszczuk: You finally got a go.

Mr CAMPBELL: Yes. The member for Inala makes quite an interesting point in speaking to this Sugar Industry Bill, in that this is the first time since I have been a member of Parliament that the National Party has not gagged one of its own sugar Bills. In 1985, 1987 and 1988 the debates were gagged. Therefore, I think that the member for Inala makes a good point. I compliment the Minister on the fact that we have not had to gag the debate. I think it is very important to ensure that all people are able to speak on the sugar industry because we have to remember that, although this legislation is before us today and we are going to make these changes, we still have to come back to the continuing inquiry. Several weeks ago the Parliament voted on aspects of competition policy, and, with the attitude of the present Federal Government, we cannot guarantee that we will retain the single desk seller. That will be of a grave concern to the sugar industry.

The Sugar Corporation has done a good job and, looking back at the history of what the Labor Party did while in Government, it brought the sugar industry out of the 1930s and 1940s into the 1990s. The Labor Government changed the whole structure of the sugar industry. Through the honourable Ed Casey, a former Primary Industries Minister, the Labor Party created the Queensland Sugar Corporation which took over the role of the Sugar Board and the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. It has been effective and successful in its administration of the sugar industry.

Mr Mulherin: Ed understood the sugar industry.

Mr CAMPBELL: Yes, Ed Casey did understand the sugar industry. He enabled very important issues to be discussed so that the industry could be dragged into the 1990s ready to face the next century. Under the previous National Party Government, everything done in relation to the sugar industry was a political move to ensure that the Government retained power over the sugar industry. In many ways, that Government actually held the sugar industry back.

The Labor Party also created the Sugar Industry Policy Council. That body has shown that the industry had a direct say in the direction of the sugar industry and it provided a direct line of communication with the Minister. I feel that that should continue. If it does not, it concerns me that we will go back to the sugar industry of the 1980s, and we do not want that. At that time, we had a Government which lied, which was deceitful and which exerted its power in order to keep the sugar industry under control. I can provide honourable members with plenty of examples.

Do honourable members remember how the coalition criticised the Federal Labor Government about granting sugar aid to Bangladesh? That was disgraceful, because that scheme was actually started by the Liberal Government in 1977 when it gave money to Bangladesh to help with its sugar industry, and there were no worries about that. However, when the scheme was continued by Labor, coalition members said some disgraceful things. Worse than that, while criticising the Federal Government, their own Government was providing technical staff from the BSES and the Department of Primary Industries. That shows the hypocritical nature of the former National Party Government.

I will quote some material later on. However, now that Government members have stirred me up, I will refer to the Facts About Sugar document. Do honourable members remember back to 1983-84, when the sugar industry was in a very difficult position? At the time, the then Queensland Government brought out a brochure stating how much it was doing for the cane industry and how much the Federal Government was not doing. However, it was all deceit. That was shown in the Budget papers. That Government supposedly provided $15m in aid to canegrowers. What did we see in the Budget papers? It provided only $10m. Not only that, it said, "We have provided this extra money through the Rural Reconstruction Board." Some $10m also had to be given to the cooperative mills back when they were in real trouble. Where did that money come from? It came from the Rural Reconstruction Board! Later, I will show how members opposite misled this Parliament about their assistance to the sugar industry.

I will return to what we did when in Government. We enabled the sugar industry to adopt new processes. We have to congratulate the Mackay sugar industry and E. D. and F. Mann on its joint venture to develop a refinery. That is the first new refinery we have had for 30 or 40 years—decades. That is simply because the industry was not allowed to develop under the repressive control of the National Party.

An Opposition member: It stagnated for 30 years.

Mr CAMPBELL: Yes, it did stagnate for 30 years. Not only that, Labor provided for an increase of 2.5 per cent per year for five years. The industry had to be dragged along kicking and screaming when that was brought in. The benefit has been a massive increase in the return to the sugar industry over the past few years. When we look at the history of the Labor Government for the six years it was in power, we see that the sugar industry developed very well.

I have some concerns that have to be raised. Firstly, as to the Sugar Corporation—I refer to the appointment of CSR as the selling agent for raw sugar. We have to utilise the experience of the new partners who have come into the sugar industry. I believe that international traders, companies such as E. D. and F. Mann, which has good contacts in different countries, and Tate and Lyle should now be allowed to look at the possibility of also acting as agents for the Sugar Corporation. CSR should not just be appointed as the sugar industry agent. We should have competitive quoting for that position. I believe we have to look at maximising the return to the sugar industry by using all of the experienced people and contacts that the sugar industry now has. Who says that CSR has necessarily been able to achieve the best possible price or is the best marketing agent for the Queensland sugar industry?

An Opposition member: No benchmark.

Mr CAMPBELL: That is right; there is no benchmark. I believe that is something that has to be improved.

I notice that there are some reservations about the new mill being developed on the Atherton Tableland. I believe it will be a great achievement to develop a new mill and to see

an effective return from primary industry on the Atherton Tableland. Some very difficult times were experienced when tobacco and other tree crops were attempted to be grown there. Some of those ventures did not go very well. A sugar industry in that area could play a very important part in that area's economic development, and it would provide economic security for the area.

It took longer than expected to implement the package for that mill. With respect to the infrastructure package for that mill, the Government was imposing what I thought were excessive requirements on the mill. The development of a mill on the Atherton Tableland will reduce the traffic pressure on the roads. At present, about 300,000 tonnes of cane is being transported from the tableland by road to Mossman, a distance of 100-odd kilometres. Transporting limed sugarcane juice will reduce the pressure on the roads because the number of trucks on the roads in that area will be fewer. The argument was that road funding should be provided, but there is actually going to be a reduction in the impact on the roads in that area when that new mill commences operation. People will have to work hard to ensure that the interests of both the growers and the mill are protected such that the mill is effective.

The *Tablelands Adviser* of 15 May contained criticism by one of the councillors on the Mareeba Shire Council. The Mareeba Shire Mayor, Councillor Chris Lewis, said—

> "However, I am disappointed that it has taken so long for a Cabinet response to calls for action.
>
> This decision could have been made six weeks ago and at that time there was a distinct possibility of having a mill on the Tablelands which could have been operating for the 1997 crushing season."

It is a pity that the inaction of the Government has held back the mill for possibly another season. Interestingly, political intrigue and the National Party have impacted on the sugar industry for over a decade. That has held back the sugar industry. For example, back in July 1982, Sir Joseph McAvoy, the then Queensland Canegrowers Council Chairman, made some comments in the *Cairns Post* about the involvement of the National Party. Such is the way the political game was played by the National Party in the sugar industry! He stated—

> "The last three appointments to positions on the Sugar Board were received by National Party members. Mr Harry Bonanno was appointed as a member of the Sugar Board in defiance of a list of suitable prospective appointees submitted to the Government by the council. Mr Bonanno had previously stood as a candidate for the party. Mr Ron Camm, a former National Party Minister, was appointed as chairman of the Sugar Board. Mr Eric White, previously a secretary to Mr Vic Sullivan, a National Party Minister, was appointed as deputy chairman of the Sugar Board."

Those were all political appointments. It concerns me that, given the recent history of this Government, nothing appears to have changed. Interestingly, further back in 1984, when the Sugar Acquisition Amendment Bill was debated, the National Party back bench was outraged at what was being proposed. Mr Menzel said—

> "The Bill is anti grower and, as I have said, is not in the best interests of the sugar industry. It will lower the No. 1 Pool price and therefore lower returns to cane-growers who are suffering probably the greatest disaster in terms of real income that they have known for many, many years. This Bill will mean only one thing, lower returns to growers, and therefore I oppose it."

That was from the National Party itself. It could see that in many cases it was not acting appropriately. The then member for Mulgrave went on further—

> "The sum of $12.58m was unlawfully advanced by CSR Limited to certain sugar milling companies in the Mackay area were moneys which belonged to the State Government and were destined to be divided amongst all the cane growers and sugar millers of Queensland.
>
> . . .
>
> Not only were those loans unlawful, but the hasty amendment to the Sugar Acquisition Act will not enable the Government to get the money back that was loaned."

That was the problem. The then member for Barron River, Mr Tenni, said—

> "The Bill proposes to validate everything unlawfully done in the past but fails to make proper provision for moneys loaned to those mills."

That is the type of thing that was going on and which has continued.

But there is more. Back in 1985 the National Party manipulated the Rural

Adjustment Fund. The then Government took out $10m in 1983, $3.2m in 1984 and $3m in 1985 but put only $15m back into the fund, which was designed to assist growers. That is how the National Party treated the sugar industry over many years.

The doozey of them all is the manner in which the former National Party Government was prepared to waste money in making changes to the sugar industry that would achieve nothing. Some of the worst legislation to be introduced was the Sugar Milling Rationalisation (Far Northern Region) Act Amendment Bill. One of the members who spoke in that debate stated—

> "The Minister who ruled sugarcane gave the growers of Goondi a pain. With the stroke of a pencil he repaid Max Menzel, but he got it wrong and had to do it again."

That comment was made by Mr Beard, a member of the Liberal Party. It illustrates the manner in which the then National Party Government treated the sugar industry. Effectively, all the Sugar Mill Rationalisation Act did was provide windfall profits to CSR. But after that legislation was passed and millions of dollars were poured into the mills, the Goondi mill still closed. That legislation did not save that mill. It was bad legislation that wasted a lot of money.

The National Party was really getting desperate in 1989. The Government of the day proposed to amend section 33A of the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act. The *News-Mail* report titled "Decision on Cane Board welcomed" stated—

> "Meeting in Brisbane yesterday, the Queensland Cane Growers' Council unanimously endorsed the Cabinet's decision not to implement section 33A of the amended Regulation of Cane Prices Act."

In actual fact, the legislation that went through was so bad and the growers complained so much that in the end Cabinet had to reverse its decision.

Everything the National Party did back in the eighties regarding assignments was a farce, and we knew that its measures would not work. In 1922, when the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board was given the right to assign land and provide peaks, there were three subsections under one section dealing with assignments. By 1989, there ended up being 32 sections—eight and a half pages of legislation—to cover what was achieved by three subsections back in 1922. That just goes to show that the National Party did not have control over and did not have an understanding of what was occurring. Overall, the National Party does not have a good record with the sugar industry.

I want to conclude by outlining the disgraceful activities of a former member of this House, Mr Katter. Certain comments that he has made were uncalled for. On 14 December, as the Federal member for Kennedy Mr Katter made outrageous, scandalous statements about Tate and Lyle, the major sweetener company in the world. He said—

> ". . . the performance of all Tate and Lyle mills in Australia has deteriorated significantly since that company took over Bundaberg Sugar."

That is so far from the truth that it is not funny. Tate and Lyle has a good record. In addition, Mr Katter implied that there had been a reduction in the application of normal safety procedures by the company. That was an outrageous statement. In actual fact, under the new Workplace Health and Safety Act the safety record of the company has been better than ever. There have been fewer accidents. That is typical of how members of the National Party have treated sections of the sugar industry over the years.

The Minister should closely examine the Bill. If members want to see an example of gobbledegook, they should look at that clause which deals with the membership of negotiating teams. Proposed new section 52B states—

> "(4) The Minister may give the owner or committee the directions necessary to ensure the nominations are provided.
>
> (5) However, the directions may not require that a person specified by the Minister be nominated.
>
> (6) If a nomination for any officer is not provided in accordance with the directions, the Governor in Council may appoint someone to the office without receiving a nomination."

Fair go! The Minister should ensure that legislation under his control makes sense. I suggest that that provision is not clear. The Minister should clarify the wording of that provision to ensure that the membership and the organisation of the negotiating teams are assured.

Hon. T. J. PERRETT (Barambah—Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry) (3.16 p.m.), in reply: Firstly, I thank all honourable members for their contributions. I

thank them for their support for this Bill. It is very important to the industry that this Bill be enacted as soon as possible, because the Bill seeks to implement the recommendations of the local area negotiation and dispute resolution report as agreed to by the industry to streamline the dispute resolution procedures. Currently, there are unresolved matters being held in abeyance pending the enactment of this legislation that will facilitate management of the 1996 season. The Bill also caters for the establishment of the Tableland mill. I will talk about that later. Prospective tableland growers and the mill proponent are keen to clarify the position before commencing the developing of lands for cane. Bundaberg Sugar is also desirous of placing orders for the purchase of milling equipment.

I want to clarify a couple of points in detail. Firstly, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee expressed concerns at the proposed section 245 headed "Transitional regulations". This section would have allowed the Governor in Council to make regulations during a transitional two-year period to deal with unexpected issues. Honourable members understand that the creation of a new mill is a very rare event in Queensland. There is no experience of this complex process for some 70 years. Also, the new local area negotiation and dispute resolution procedures are very different from those operating in industry now. Industry and the Government each want this to succeed, even though we cannot anticipate how such a novel process will actually work in practice. The intention of this provision was to ensure that the Act could operate flexibly in meeting any unexpected circumstances. However, the Scrutiny of Legislation Committee's concerns are real and important, and accordingly I intend to move an amendment at the Committee stage to omit the proposed section 245.

Secondly, I am aware that growers are keenly watching this Bill, especially the provisions setting up the new process for making local awards. This process was agreed by industry after lengthy consultation. The details of how this process will work were set out in the working party report given to the then Minister for Primary Industries in November 1994. This report is mentioned in the Explanatory Notes. I seek leave at this point to table a copy of this important report so that honourable members can have ready access to it.

Leave granted.

Mr PERRETT: The working party report emphasised the need for the new process, and I take this opportunity to quote from that report to put this Bill in its context. The report states—

> "It is noted that the criteria to be used to resolve disputes should be commercially oriented rather than legalistic in approach and should, while having regard to local conditions and circumstances, be focused on:
>
> improving the Queensland sugar industry's efficiency and competitiveness;
>
> enhancing the benefits flowing from the Queensland sugar industry to growers and millers; and
>
> encouraging initiative and innovation among growers and mill owners."

The changes in jurisdiction, the shift to local area negotiations and the new dispute resolution processes implement the working party's recommendations. This is a shift to industry control over local awards and a strong emphasis on improving productivity and reducing costs. The new process is not in fact a fundamental change in the nature of the decisions recorded in local awards. The fundamental core of these decisions remains in the hands of industry. It is not up for grabs in the arbitration process. The working party report on which this Bill is based sets the issue out as follows—

> "The existing formula would be used for the 1996 season onwards unless there was agreement in a particular mill area to use some other approach."

In other words, the intent of the new system is not to make changes to the fundamental core of the local awards or the present division of sugar moneys formula. It does, however, provide more capacity and flexibility to reach agreements on a local basis. At the same time, accountability for decision making is strengthened by the new dispute resolution process.

I would like to thank the individual members for their contributions. I think most of the members who spoke during this debate do represent major sugar producing areas. Their contributions to the debate were, in the main, very positive. However, I would like to set the record straight in relation to a statement made to the House yesterday by the Opposition spokesperson, Mr Palaszczuk, that we should take note of the contribution of the previous Minister, Ed Casey, and his understanding of the sugar industry in Queensland. If members

were to ask any sugar industry leaders in Queensland, I know that they would tell them the exact opposite. I have talked to quite a lot of them in recent months. They would say that former Minister Casey's belief that he knew something about the sugar industry was his biggest problem. It meant that he did not listen, because he thought he knew it all. It meant that he chaired industry policy committees because he saw himself as a sugar industry leader. In fact, Mr Casey's unshakeable belief that he was some kind of "sugar guru" came at the expense of sound policy development in the industry. The current sugar industry working party review and the uncertainty about future production and marketing arrangements are a result of Mr Casey's failure to understand the big issues confronting the industry and his failure to get his legislation right.

Furthermore, Opposition claims that "no Government has done more to ensure the long-term future of the Queensland sugar industry than the last Labor Government" are absolute nonsense. The industry expansion to which Mr Palaszczuk referred would have occurred even if Mickey Mouse had been Premier during the last six years and the Disneyland Party was in power. The honourable member for Inala seems to have missed one vital point about the recent expansion in the sugar industry. That point is that there would have been no expansion without the market demand. Perhaps I need to give Mr Palaszczuk a small economics lesson.

There was a worldwide shortage of sugar, the price went up, more Queensland farmers realised they could make a quid out of sugar, and hence the industry expanded. This had absolutely nothing to do with Ed Casey, Bob Gibbs, Wayne Goss, Bob Hawke or even Paul Keating—hard as it may be for some members of the Opposition to believe. Wayne Goss may have convinced the people of Queensland to put his party in power for a while, but he did not convince the people of China to put more sugar on their porridge.

Addressing Mr Palaszczuk's one and only valid point raised yesterday—that was the issue of the possible impact of the new Atherton Tableland mill on the existing coastal sugar mills. Let me give Mr Palaszczuk some insight into recent events.

Mr Barton: Why don't you speak about the issues?

Mr PERRETT: I ask the honourable member to listen to this. When an interim local board was formed on the tableland—and this legislation will allow the proper board to be established—it called for growers to indicate their interest in growing sugar. The interim board was looking for 6,000 hectares of assignment. It was overwhelmed with a response of 11,000 hectares—almost double what it was expecting.

The important point about this tremendous response from growers is that it has all come from new growers. Not one hectare of this land has grown cane before. This demonstrates two things: firstly, that the Government's provision of infrastructure which will allow a new mill to be built on the tableland was the right decision. Unlike the previous Government, we did not sit on our hands and procrastinate; we got stuck into it and, within three months, we had made the decision to upgrade water and transport infrastructure to enable an interested party to build a new mill.

The second thing that the overwhelming response has shown is that there is plenty of available land and willing farmers on the tableland to satisfy the needs of not only a new mill but also the existing coastal mills. In fact, Mossman mill recently called for an expression of interest in increased expansion on the tableland and has received a substantial response. It will actually be increasing the 350,000 tonnes of cane that it already sources from the tableland in the future. This Government is working with the directors of Mossman mill to investigate the opening up of new cane production areas.

The member for Waterford mentioned in his contribution his discussions with Mr George Quaid and certain areas of land on the northern tableland. This Government is more than keen to develop those sorts of discussions with the Mossman mill. I would like the member for Inala to be reassured that there is a spirit of cooperation between the existing mills and the new mill. This Friday, 26 July, the interim tableland local board and the Mossman local board will hold their first meeting to work together through the issues and to ensure that any problems are quickly resolved.

The only limiting factor to the further expansion of sugar in the far north appears to be water. This Government, unlike the previous administration, understands how imperative water is for Queensland's economic and social development and has committed $1 billion for water infrastructure in this State. As a result, as events are unfolding, earlier fears of a shortage of cane to supply existing mills and a new mill are dissolving. The sugar industry once again can expand and make

future plans with certainty and confidence because it now has a Government that is working with it in open and honest partnership and responding to its needs.

The member for Inala raised a number of specific issues, and I will now address these accordingly. He asked about the bulk sugar terminal organisations. The BSTOs were created by the former Harbours Act. They operate the bulk sugar terminals under a delegation from the Queensland Sugar Corporation. It should be noted that the Harbours Act was repealed in 1994, but the sugar terminal arrangements continued on a transitionary basis under the Transport Infrastructure Act. The transition period is almost over, and the BSTOs will soon cease to exist. This Bill provides for management of the terminals by the corporation when the BSTOs cease to exist. This Bill clarifies management of the terminals by bringing them completely under the Sugar Industry Act and in the hands of the corporation. In all other respects, management of the bulk sugar terminals continues as before, in accordance with the intention of both the existing Act and the sugar infrastructure package agreements. I am currently holding discussions with my colleague, the Minister for Transport, to finalise arrangements for tenure of bulk sugar terminals. We are making very good progress—something not achieved under the previous Government.

The honourable member asked about single desk selling arrangements and domestic pricing. The review currently under way will deal with these matters. The Bill is not actually related to this. At the moment, the Queensland Sugar Corporation is the single desk seller for both export and domestic markets. Future directions will be decided after the review gives its recommendations to Government, and I do not want to pre-empt the outcome.

In regard to contract lengths—the Bill provides that mill supply contracts can be exempted by regulation from the Act's three-year limit. This will allow greater flexibility and foster industry expansion and efficiency. This is part of a package ensuring long-term viability of existing coastal mills and affording security of supply arrangements between growers and any proposed new mill.

Queensland's sugar industry is very efficient, and the ability of growers and millers to negotiate flexibly will add efficiency by expanding the options open to the parties. The Bill ushers important changes into the industry, especially the new mill and the new local negotiation and dispute resolution procedures. However, the issues raised by the honourable member do not alter the intent of the original Act. In this regard, the Bill fixes things that need change—given our experience with the Act over the past five years.

The member for Mackay raised some issues. He represents a very major sugar production area. He spoke of the value of the industry to his electorate. Obviously he has been talking to his predecessor, Mr Casey. He certainly displayed quite a knowledge of his local industry. I congratulate him on that. The member spoke about the Policy Council and asked what my views might be on the council. I have been talking to industry about the Policy Council; if they want it, they can have it. I do not want to change it. I want to listen to industry. I have always said that I will negotiate with industry on these matters. If the industry feels that that is the best way to get its message across to me on deciding the direction of the industry, I am quite prepared to support that.

The member for Mackay referred to the amendment to section 110. I can assure him that that change does not affect the corporations powers in substance. In regard to the negotiating teams, the Bill implements the working party's recommendations for annual appointment. That is all set out in the report that I tabled a moment ago. Leaving payment for meetings in the industry's hands also preserves the existing policy for industry members of local boards. The Bill provides that a regulation about a new mill can only be made if the Minister is satisfied on a number of points. I can assure the honourable member that the ways in which the Minister can be satisfied on those points have been canvassed with the relevant industry participants and they are not concerned about the extent of the consultation. This legislation will open the way for the building of a new mill on the Atherton Tableland and if any other mills are developed—the honourable member mentioned earlier possible new cooperative mills in various parts of the State—this legislation will cover that as well.

The member for Hinchinbrook is a grower himself in the Herbert district. I have always believed that people who are involved in the industry and make their living out of it really get to know the failings of an industry. Certainly, Mr Rowell is somebody who is experienced in the industry. He is a successful grower. I welcome his contribution and also welcome his input into my primary industries policy and Bills committee.

The member for Waterford has a long history in the industry. He displayed a very keen knowledge of it. Particularly, he expressed some concerns about the expansion in the north. We know that some people in that region are concerned about the development of the new mill on the tableland, but the way things are developing, that production area will come on stream and be a major production area not just in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality, and many of the concerns of the people associated with the coastal mills may be put to rest.

The member for Mulgrave was once again an excellent representative for her electorate, which is a major production area. She also expressed concerns about the viability of those coastal mills.

Mr Foley: Almost as good as the previous member.

Mr PERRETT: I am sure that she is better than the previous member.

The member for Mirani, a former Australian Canefarmers Association chairman, displays a very intimate knowledge of the industry through his being so closely involved in the agri-political side of the industry before he came into this place. He made a very valuable contribution. He is also a grower. He highlighted his great knowledge of the industry.

I thought that the debate was very positive until I heard the contribution of the member for Bundaberg. His contribution certainly lowered the standard of the debate, as his contributions usually do. As he represents a major sugar area, he should know better. What did he do? He turned the clock back.

Mr Stoneman: There's not much sugar grown in the seat of Bundaberg. In fact, I don't think there is even a single stick. He is just a pretender.

Mr PERRETT: Obviously, he proved that he does not have an intimate knowledge of the industry.

Mr Santoro: He was being political, wasn't he?

Mr PERRETT: I would go as far as saying that, if he cannot do any better than that contribution, he will never reach the front bench. It is no wonder that he is still sitting back where he is after all his years in Parliament.

I would like to thank members for what I considered was a debate that was handled in a very cooperative manner. I am sure that, if we can look forward to that sort of cooperation in the future under the new shadow Minister for Primary Industries, it will certainly be a delight to work with him.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon T. J. Perrett (Barambah—Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Forestry) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—

Mr MULHERIN (3.37 p.m.): I apologise. This is the first time that I have ever spoken during the Committee stage.

Mr FitzGerald: We all have to do a maiden some day.

Mr MULHERIN: Thank you. I refer to proposed new section 52C, which appears at line 5 on page 10, and which states—

> "The Governor in Council may at any time remove a member of a negotiating team from office as a member."

For what reason can a member be removed? Should that be clarified in this part of the legislation?

I refer also to proposed new section 52D, which appears at line 8. It states—

> "A person who is not a member of a negotiating team may be appointed to act as a member for any meeting of the team by the entity, or jointly by the entities, that nominated the member for appointment."

If a member failed to turn up to a meeting at a time when a resolution was needed, what would stop someone from getting the secretary or the tea lady to fill in? Should that be clarified?

Mr PERRETT: Firstly, in response to the query relating to proposed new section 52C, the provision that the Governor in Council may at any time remove a member of a negotiating team from office as a member needs to exist because we know that, from time to time, various circumstances arise. Those people would have to be removed from that negotiating team due to a criminal proceeding or a bankruptcy. As far as I can see that is a fairly normal arrangement.

Mr MULHERIN: Does the Minister think those reasons should be spelled out? The Minister has just spelled out some reasons. We heard previous speakers refer to political interference. The Minister mentioned some

other issues in relation to criminal activity. Should they be spelled out in the legislation?

Mr PERRETT: I am advised that this is a standard clause. If one has the power to appoint, as has the Governor in Council, one also has to have the power to remove. I think that standard clause is well understood generally.

Proposed new section 52D provides that a person who is not a member of a negotiating team may be appointed to act as a member for any meeting of the team by the entity, or jointly by the entities, that nominated the member for appointment. That actually makes provision for the mill owners and the suppliers to appoint a person in the event of necessity. I am sure that those entities who made the original nomination would not be prepared to nominate the tea lady unless she had a knowledge of the industry and she was prepared to represent their points of view. I believe that this clause provides some flexibility, which is probably needed.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 16, as read, agreed to.

Clause 17—

Mr MULHERIN (3.41 p.m.): The Minister referred to the industry policy councils. If he is not intending to abolish the industry policy council, maybe an insertion could be made in proposed subsection (4) after line 24 which could state, "provided the Minister has referred it to the policy council."

Mr PERRETT: No, I cannot see that that is actually required under this particular amendment to the section. As I indicated earlier, the policy council is something for the industry to decide. Policy councils are only as good as the people who are appointed to them and the tools that they are given to work with. I must say that I have had some mixed reviews about the operations of the policy council. I am prepared to give it a go. It is contained in the current Sugar Act. I do not believe that it needs to be spelt out again.

Clause 17, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 18 to 31, as read, agreed to.

Clause 32—

Mr PERRETT: (3.43 p.m.) I move the following amendment—

"At page 20, lines 19 to 26, and page 21, lines 1 to 28—

omit."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 32, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Perrett, by leave, read a third time.

JUVENILE JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 July (see p. 1558).

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga) (3.46 p.m.): This Bill is a spectacular failure. It will not result in one fewer break and enter or assault. It does not respond to community concerns for effective action to combat crime. It certainly does not provide measures to help divert youth from a life of crime. This is not a Bill to inspire those who hunger and thirst after justice. It is not a Bill that shows an understanding of youth or the great challenges confronting them and their families. For example, take the issue of youth unemployment. One could look high and low through the Minister's comments for the strategy of the Government in respect of juvenile offending and see no reference at all to the issue of youth unemployment. Yet it remains the greatest single challenge to young people and the greatest single social issue confronting our society today.

The strategy of the Government in juvenile crime is in disarray. It is in disarray because, among other things, the Government has split up the responsibility for the policy in juvenile justice among three separate departments and among three separate Ministers. We have the spectre of the Attorney-General being responsible for the legislation brought before this House. Yet at the same time we have another Minister, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, who is to be responsible—if this Bill passes through the Parliament in its present form—for juvenile detention centres. Thirdly, we have a Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care who is responsible for the provision of services to families and to the community to help deter young people from a life of crime.

There is no evidence whatsoever of any strategic thinking among those Ministers. In fact, quite the contrary. This Bill sets out a legalistic framework without any strategy at all for attacking the causes of crime. This Bill mounts no attack on the causes of crime. It does not even purport to be part of a strategy

that attacks the causes of crime. Nowhere in this Bill and nowhere in the Minister's second-reading speech do we see any analysis of the causes of crime—poverty, inequality and unemployment.

If this Bill had been couched as part of some strategy to attack the root cause of crime, then one might have been able to consider it in a broader context. However, one looks high and low for some evidence of a strategy to attack the fundamentals. For example, where is the Government's strategy with respect to attacking those social and economic causes of crime? During the term of the Labor Government, efforts were made to attack those causes—the Youth Conservation Corps and the youth jobs plan, which was part of a $150m jobs plan. My colleague the shadow Minister for Families had a very successful Workplus scheme. In addition, programs such as the Youth and Community Combined Action program sought to reach out to community groups concerned with juvenile crime prevention. They ran a range of projects with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in places like Murgon, Cherbourg, Palm Island, Aurukun and here in Brisbane.

Nowhere do we see any of the Aboriginal Outreach programs contemplated either in the Bill or in the Minister's second-reading speech. Nowhere do we see any reference to a strategy by Government to continue with the great Labor initiative of the community recreation centres, where, over a five-year period, $50m was committed to assisting communities to provide recreational facilities and alternatives for young people. Nowhere in the thinking of this Government do we see any systematic commitment to the community renewal program that the former Housing Minister, Terry Mackenroth, made provision for.

Similarly, nowhere in the strategy of the Government do we see any provision for working with local government to address problems at a local level, either through effective planning or the provision of community services. How odd it is that this Government should be so out of touch with what is happening in local government. For example, take the very fine work being done by the Cairns City Council with young people, and particularly with young people in conflict with the law. I refer, for example, to the Cairns community arts project, Graft'n'Arts, which reaches out to young people at risk, gives them chances and opportunities, and helps them to get jobs.

Those are the areas where one might hope to see some coordinated strategy to combat the causes the juvenile crime. However, sadly, this Government is bereft of strategy. It places before this Parliament nothing more than a moribund return to the bad old days. The material before the Parliament reflects a sad lack of consultation on the part of the Government. That lack of consultation is patently manifest if one reads, for example, the response of the Criminal Justice Commission to the proposed changes to the Juvenile Justice Act. For the interest of honourable members, I table that CJC response.

It is interesting that the Minister was not able to attend a public seminar held a few short weeks ago at Parliament House in Brisbane, which was organised by the peak youth body, the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland, to discuss these proposed changes. The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice was missing in action. Similarly, the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice was missing in action in respect of an invitation to the crime forum held the other night in Townsville. This is characteristic of the approach taken by this Government, namely, to go through the cosmetics of consultation, but to avoid fronting up to public meetings with those who work in the system and who engage in serious discussion and debate. It is all very well for the Minister and his colleagues to stage-manage their own public meetings to inflame discontent on these issues, but when the question arises as to whether they will meet in public discussion with those who actually work in the juvenile justice system, one finds them missing in action.

That is all the more disturbing in view of the savage criticisms that have been forthcoming from a wide range of community groups in relation to these proposals. Firstly, let me turn to the Criminal Justice Commission's submission to the Government, which seems to have been blithely ignored by the Minister, who has pressed on with the proposals which had been floated. The Criminal Justice Commission has a statutory duty to be involved with matters of law reform and to make reports to the Parliament. It advises that it was not even consulted by the Minister and had to make a submission simply in response to a public call for submissions. The CJC has stated—

> "The CJC is of the view that the proposed changes may be in conflict with the terms of a number of International Conventions and standards relating to the administration of juvenile justice."

One might have thought that, with such stinging criticisms from a statutory commission, the Minister and the Government might have taken pause to listen carefully to the community.

Mr Fouras: They are just making politics. They are not interested in hearing facts.

Mr FOLEY: I note the observation of the member for Ashgrove, who has a strong commitment to the wellbeing of young people and their families.

I note with great concern that, in the Minister's speech to the House, he referred to what he described as "community concerns", yet nowhere did he refer to any basic facts in relation to the nature of the problem confronting the Queensland community. In that respect, let me inform the House of a submission made to the Minister—one among many from youth groups, all of which appear to have been ignored. This particular submission is from the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland, and it makes the following point—

> "Youth crime is not on the increase. Although the statistics indicate a 3% increase in convictions for young people, the population increase of 5.1% (of 10-16 year olds from 1988/9-1993-4) suggests that the proportion of young people who are offending has decreased."

That is based on statistics from the juvenile justice branch of then Department of Family and Community Services.

Those sobering statistics help put this debate into context. They help us to understand that there is a crime problem, but not a crime wave. They help us to understand that the problems of crime require careful and serious attention; they require an attack upon the causes of crime; they require an attack, in particular, on problems of youth unemployment. Yet nowhere throughout the Government's strategy does one see any serious attempt to do this.

Indeed, I see the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations in the Chamber. He remains strangely silent while his Federal colleague, Amanda Vanstone, slashes funding to Skillshare and other youth labour market reforms. Why on earth should the honourable member, who is now so voluble in the Chamber, be so silent when he needs to be heard—namely, in standing up for some of those young people, and particularly the long-term unemployed? One can understand why the term "employment" was removed from his title. He and his colleagues are squirming over the fact that Senator Vanstone and the Federal Government are slashing funds to employment and training programs.

One has only to go to regional Queensland to see what is happening. For example, just the other day, the member for Rockhampton and I spoke with long-term unemployed people at the Skillshare in Rockhampton. They are engaged in a very worthwhile labour market program. That Skillshare faces a 33 per cent cut in funding at a time when youth unemployment remains the greatest challenge facing us in society. The Government stands condemned for its complete failure to address that issue, to stand up for the rights of young Queenslanders and to ensure that they get a fair go. Instead, it is much easier for this Government to come before the Parliament and to recite the easy slogans, for example, that it is getting tough on law and order. It is much more difficult to actually do something to change the circumstances which impel young people towards patterns of offending. However, that would involve Government members showing a little courage. It would involve their showing some solidarity with respect to the rights of young people in Queensland and a willingness to stand up and criticise those of their Federal colleagues who are slashing Federal funding to young people, in particular to the labour market programs.

Mr Littleproud: What about the Keating Government?

Mr FOLEY: Under the Keating Government one saw the One Nation program, the Working Nation program and an attempt to help people. Instead, what one sees from the coalition is a lack of willingness to confront the issue of youth unemployment and a willingness simply to use convenient slogans and the big stick of legislation in the hope that that will work magic. This Bill will not result in one fewer break and enter or assault. The people of Queensland want to see effective action. They do not simply want to hear the rhetorical puff of members of the Government. They want to see some effective action taken—some real action—to attack the causes of crime.

Let me turn to a number of areas of concern within the Bill itself. Under this Bill, the prison authorities will run juvenile detention centres. This Bill transfers responsibility for the conduct of juvenile detention centres from the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care to the Queensland Corrective Services Commission. What an unsatisfactory

state of affairs! However well intentioned the officers of the Queensland Corrective Services Commission may be, they are in the business of running prisons. Their working culture is a prison culture. Their structures, organisation and ethos have evolved out of prison administration. They are there to provide secure custody for adult offenders. That is a grossly inappropriate basis for the conduct of juvenile detention. The conduct of juvenile detention centres should be inextricably linked with the provision of services to families, youth and the community. That is the relevant connection.

Where in this Bill does one see any spark of rehabilitation for young people? If one places young people in juvenile detention centres run by prison authorities, one is making a fundamentally wrong move. It is fundamentally wrong in principle that prison authorities should be running juvenile detention centres. The whole spirit of the law compels an approach to juvenile justice which places an emphasis on rehabilitation and the links between young people, their families and the community. It is profoundly important that those young people, if they are to be detained, be detained under an authority which has that link. This legislation will result in young Queenslanders being exposed to a prison culture early in their lives. It is difficult to understand——

Mr Littleproud: They are correctional centres, not prisons. Get the terminology right.

Mr FOLEY: The honourable member makes a distinction without a difference. The honourable member speaks from an abyss of ignorance and with a remarkable hard-heartedness towards the issue of juvenile justice. It is surprising that those of the Liberal Party who purport to hold some regard for human rights should be so dominated by the likes of the Minister for Environment, who simply wants to turn back the clock in respect of juvenile justice as he wants to turn back the clock in relation to the environment. One might have hoped that the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice would have stood for some better principles in this area. One might have hoped that the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice would bring legislation before this House which spoke of justice, of the wellbeing and needs of young people and of the actions to be taken to prevent crime. Instead, one sees legislation which simply shuffles those young people and children in juvenile detention centres into the hands of the prison authorities. This is not a step forward in civilisation; it is a step backwards. If ever there were a case of turning back the clock, this is it.

The whole thrust of effort to confront these issues over recent decades has been based upon a recognition that there are certain principles governing juvenile justice which require the courts—the law—to take into account that what we are dealing with here are juveniles, not adults. The honourable member seems brazenly indifferent to this simple fact. The honourable member may think that it is popular or convenient to sound tough. He may think that he can explain to the families of young people throughout this State why he and his Government have abandoned a commitment to having juvenile detention centres linked with support for families and the provision of support to communities in favour of linking young offenders to a prison culture. If he can do that, then he would be a very extraordinary fellow indeed. There is an expectation that the law will be firm, tough, and fair, but there is also an expectation that the law in dealing with juveniles should proceed on different premises from those applying to adult offenders. If it not be so, why on earth have a Juvenile Justice Act at all? Perhaps it is the intention or desire of some members to blast away those fundamentals of progress that have been made in addressing the needs of young people in the area of juvenile justice.

Mr Littleproud: Are you going to dismiss all the recommendations of Fred McGuire, too, are you?

Mr FOLEY: Let me turn to the next great——

Mr Stoneman: He doesn't take practicals. No practical interjections received.

Mr FOLEY: I am astonished by the honourable member. I must say that the honourable member's interjection keeps my sense of dismay fresh. The honourable member displays a characteristic lack of knowledge of the area of juvenile justice. I might say, for the benefit of the honourable member, that over a period of almost a quarter of a century in one form or other I have either worked or been involved with young people and with the system of juvenile justice from my days of having worked as a child welfare officer, as we then were, back in the old Children's Services Department. So whatever accusations the honourable member may wish to make, he should not indulge himself with the fond hope that my views spring from lack of experience.

Let me turn to the second area of great concern, namely, the proposal to provide greater powers of arrest, fingerprinting and palm printing. Let me try to assist honourable

members to understand some of the provisions of these arrest powers. There is in the Juvenile Justice Act a provision that police officers should use measures other than arrest to bring children before the court. The Act provides for a restriction on the arrest of a child, namely, that a proceeding against a child for an offence must be started by way of complaint and summons or an attendance notice where possible, and those details are set out. That is based upon a very simple, elementary principle, namely, that it is the function of police to bring suspected offenders before the court, and if one can do that without arrest, then that is the course that should be followed. One might think that that is plain commonsense, and indeed it is, and it is set out in the provisions of the Act.

However, under the legislation which is now before the Parliament, it is proposed to increase police powers to enable the police power of arrest to be used in circumstances of what are described in the legislation as serious offences when previously that applied only to offences carrying the penalty of life imprisonment. It is instructive in that respect to note the observations of the Criminal Justice Commission set out at pages 5 and 6 of its submission. The submission states—

> "Accordingly, the CJC does not support the proposed amendments to the arrest provisions in the Juvenile Justice Act."

It is also instructive to reflect upon the process of reform of police powers which has occurred over a number of years in Queensland. It was recognised by Commissioner Fitzgerald that there was a need to review the law of police powers. That is why it was set up for the Criminal Justice Commission to do just that. That has been a long and exhaustive process which has involved many thousands of submissions from concerned citizens and groups throughout the community to the Criminal Justice Commission and to the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. But all of that has seemingly been to no avail, because this attempt to increase police powers in this area pays no regard whatsoever to all of that work that has gone before. It pays no regard whatsoever to the attempt to balance the legitimate needs for police power on the one hand with the rights and liberties of individuals on the other.

I know that there are many in the Liberal and National Parties who want to deliver something for their Police Union mates, and perhaps they think that this would be a convenient way to give extra police powers of the sort for which the Police Union has campaigned for many years. But what is remarkable about this is the complete lack of reference to that whole effort that has been undertaken by the Criminal Justice Commission and the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. It is all the more extraordinary because members of the Liberal Party and the National Party participated in that process. The Minister for Training and Industrial Relations participated in that process when he was a member of the committee, and yet all of that has gone out the window. What one sees here is simply an attempt to give extra police powers of arrest.

The honourable member for Thuringowa gave a very powerful speech to the Parliament only a couple of weeks ago in which he set out his concerns about police using the powers that they have to bring people before the court. I think it is instructive to realise that police have all of the powers to arrest and to summons with respect to juveniles that they have in the case of adults. In addition to those powers, police under the Act have power to issue an attendance notice. That is a very sensible provision, because it overcomes on the one hand the problems faced by police officers in doing the paperwork necessary to issue a complaint and summons, and on the other hand it overcomes the problems of deprivation of liberty that arise from the use of the arrest power.

What there is in the Act is a provision which honourable members might well think is a sensible provision in all cases, namely, that one should use the complaint and summons or the attendance notice rather than arrest where that is reasonably possible. Of course, in many cases it will not be reasonably possible where the police officer apprehends on reasonable grounds that the alleged offender is not going to appear before the court or where there is a real likelihood of an ongoing commission of the offence. The legislation already makes provision for that. Instead, what is being proposed here is an increase of police powers. I have no doubt that if this legislation passes the Parliament in this form, the Police Minister will be back here very quickly seeking to extend police powers in respect of adult offenders.

Let me turn to the issue of fingerprinting and palm printing. This proposal authorises police to make application for the taking of fingerprints and palm prints in the case of those children and young people who attend court upon attendance notices rather than arrest.

Basically, the Opposition takes the view that the laws with respect to fingerprinting and palm printing with respect to adults, namely, that they may be taken upon arrest, are applicable for children. But this Bill gives the police greater powers of fingerprinting and palm printing in the case of juveniles than in the case of adults. In the case of adults, police have that power upon arrest, but they do not otherwise have that power. It is argued by the Attorney-General that they should have that power, because the attendance notice provision means that children will be brought before the court by means other than arrest. But that rather begs the question that where there is no need for arrest in the first place, then is it proper and just that other means should be used to bring children and young people before the court? We see here yet another increase in police power—again without any serious analysis having been undertaken. I refer to pages six to eight of the submission of the Criminal Justice Commission, wherein the Criminal Justice Commission sets out its concerns in respect of these fingerprinting proposals.

I turn to a third area of concern, namely, in respect of the admissibility of cautions in the criminal history of children and young people. I foreshadow that the Opposition will be moving amendments in relation to these matters. Traditionally, a caution is used by police, particularly with young people, as a means of diverting the young person from the courts and the criminal justice system. A caution in appropriate cases can be an effective means of giving a young offender a shock and enabling that young offender to be diverted from an appearance before a court and from any subsequent action that might be taken against him or her.

A Government member: It hasn't worked very well, has it?

Mr FOLEY: In many cases it does work quite well. That is why the provision for caution is retained in the existing Bill. I am surprised by the honourable member's interjection because, frankly, it has worked so well that the Honourable the Attorney-General wants to give legislative recognition to what the Labor Government did, namely, to provide for victim/offender conferencing. Imitation being the sincerest form of flattery, I commend the Honourable the Attorney-General for his flattery.

The issue here is whether or not those cautions will be admissible as part of the criminal history of the young person. Very great concern has been expressed about this, because it poses a number of dangers. Indeed, the Criminal Justice Commission had this to say—

> "The CJC considers this to be a dangerous and unacceptable proposal which breaches basic rights."

That is very strong language. One may ask why. The use of a caution—the whole intrinsic value of a caution—is that the child or young person is deflected—diverted—from the criminal justice system. This legislation effectively makes that caution part of the criminal history of that child or young person. That has a number of dangers. Firstly, it has the danger that there is no finding of guilt or any necessary admission of guilt on the part of that young person, yet it becomes part of that young person's criminal history. Secondly, it reduces the incentive for young persons and their legal representatives to go down the path of a caution. It will tend to encourage young people to be uncooperative with cautions and to take their chances at having a trial in the Childrens Court in respect of the matter. So in that respect it may well be self-defeating. The intrinsic value of cautions lies in the fact that they are an alternative. This legislation compromises their alternative nature. It is all the more unfortunate that it should do so because, in its Bill, the Government has community conferencing facilities which the Opposition welcomes in broad terms. I will come to that in a little while.

The fourth area of major concern lies in the provisions to allow life imprisonment in respect of young people. The current Act sets a limit of 14 years as the maximum term of imprisonment that may be imposed on a child or young person. That is based upon the proposition that a period of 14 years is tantamount to life in that it represents more than the remembered lifetime of a child or young person. It represents one of the basic differences that a justice system should have in dealing with young people as opposed to adults. However, this has been a matter of public concern.

I refer in particular to the observations of Justice Williams of the Supreme Court in respect of a tragic murder in recent times. Accordingly, it is to be noted that, in his sentencing remarks, Justice Williams contemplated the desirability of imposing a harsher penalty upon young persons in the case of murder. But what needs to be understood is that this legislation goes far beyond the case of murder. This legislation sets a regime whereby it is available in a wide range of offences which otherwise attract the

penalty of life imprisonment. So this is a very significant extension—not just in murder cases but in a range of cases which go well beyond murder—and represents a very significant blurring of the distinction between the juvenile justice system and the adult justice system. Accordingly, the Opposition will move to confine those provisions simply to the case of murder, consistent with the observations that were made by Justice Williams of the Supreme Court, the Chairman of the Law Reform Commission. The extension of life imprisonment—as broadly as it has been done—is inappropriate. It has been very strenuously criticised by the Criminal Justice Commission, and rightly so.

I turn to the fifth major area of concern, namely, the area of compensation orders on parents. It should be said in this regard that the existing legislation already makes provision for compensation orders to be made against parents—a simple fact of which sight seems to have been lost at some times during the debate. This Bill shifts the onus of proof from proof beyond a reasonable doubt, the criminal standard, to the balance of probabilities, the civil standard. That is quite inappropriate. It involves the imposition of a criminal penalty without the satisfaction of the criminal standard of proof. In other words, the parent in such circumstances may be ordered to make a payment in respect of a crime of which that parent may not have been able to be convicted himself or herself if one adopted the relevant standard of proof. That is an objection based on legal principle, but there is a more compelling reason why one would be concerned about this proposal: it does nothing to provide support and assistance for those families who genuinely want support and assistance to cope with the great problems that they confront upon having a juvenile in their family in conflict with the law.

From my years of working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Service, I am well aware of the importance of field officers providing transport and assistance to help get parents to court, to help them to understand the process and to participate in it. However, this is yet another action on the part of the Government that has been the subject of stinging criticism from the Criminal Justice Commission. The CJC stated—

> "The CJC has grave concerns about the proposal to change the standard of proof required before an order for compensation can be made against the parents of juvenile offenders."

There are many ways of assisting families to combat the problems that lead to crime, and this is a most unsatisfactory way of providing a real contribution to attacking the causes of crime.

I turn now to a number of provisions of the Bill that the Opposition welcomes. We certainly welcome the provisions for community conferencing or victim/offender conferencing. In accordance with the principles set out in the Criminal Offence Victims Act, which I had the honour of introducing into this House last year, the Bill contemplates a scheme in which victims have the opportunity to confront their offender. For far too long, victims have been marginalised, put on the sidelines, in the debate on criminal justice. That is why the Labor Government introduced programs to assist in victim/offender conferencing.

Having said that, I really must draw the attention of the House to the fact that the very program in the Justice Department that organises this mediation, the Alternative Dispute Resolution program, is the subject of savage cuts from the current Government. The Alternative Dispute Resolution program is having its funding slashed by the Attorney-General and his Government at the very time that the Attorney is introducing this legislation in the House. That is a slap in the face for victims of crime. That is really something that all members of this Parliament should deplore.

The Alternative Dispute Resolution program is a very worthwhile program. It is a program that can assist victims in coming to terms with the experience that they have had, and it can assist in offenders—particularly juvenile offenders—being confronted with the awful reality of the harm that they have done. From my work as a social worker and lawyer over many years, I am aware that such programs can have an enormously helpful effect.

There are a number of other areas of procedural detail recommended by the Childrens Court Judge McGuire that the Opposition welcomes, for example, the amendment, which I regard as largely technical, that the court may make a number of orders rather than simply one order in respect of each offence that comes before the court. I think that is a sensible provision and one that the Opposition will support.

The Opposition will continue to press the Government to be genuine with respect to the provision of services for victims. I take this opportunity to remind the House of the

promise by Mr Beanland when he was in Opposition to provide an extra $1m in funding to the Victims of Crime Association, which is still waiting to hear from Mr Beanland as to whether he will honour that promise.

During the course of consultation on this Bill, I have travelled throughout Queensland to speak with victims of crime organisations. I have had the pleasure of travelling with the shadow Minister for Police and Corrective Services throughout Queensland speaking with Victims of Crime Associations, local authorities, youth workers who are in day-to-day contact with young people in conflict with the law, police officers and a whole host of persons who are concerned to attack the causes of crime and to make a serious contribution towards the problems of juvenile offending. Throughout the course of those meetings, again and again people were telling us that they were concerned that Governments needed to do more than simply talk tough and increase the number of children and young people in juvenile detention centres.

Subsequent to the Juvenile Justice Act of 1992, significantly more young people are in detention than there were prior to the Labor Government coming to office. Let us not hear any of this nonsense about Labor somehow being soft on crime—far from it. But the question is: what is one to do to attack the causes of crime? Labor believes in a strong criminal law. People who commit offences should expect to be brought before the courts and punished. But that being said, one must move to some serious analysis of the causes of crime and what one is to do to confront them. That is why it is so important that we should see from the Government a strategy that provides for genuine employment programs for young people. That is why we should see some strategy from the Government that sets out genuine liaison with the Aboriginal community.

I note that Minister for Family Services is present in the Chamber. I note that he has continued some of the work done by his predecessor, Mrs Woodgate. However, the division of responsibilities between Mr Lingard and Mr Beanland was manifest only the other day when Mr Lingard was on the Gold Coast speculating his personal view of the need for even more increased police powers to deal with the problem of drugs. His colleague Mr Cooper has been speculating on the need for increased police powers to detain young people pursuant to a curfew. We see juvenile justice policy in disarray.

Mr Lingard: Don't you think we need to stop drugs?

Mr FOLEY: I think that I would like to see some coherent strategy from the Government instead of three separate Ministers pursuing separate policies and separate strategies, each with his own bright idea that illuminates for a moment an otherwise confused and dark environment.

I would like to see some action being taken in a strategic way to combat the causes of crime. What one sees in this juvenile justice legislation is far from that. It is deeply disappointing that we see this division of responsibilities leading to a lack of planning and a lack of serious attack upon the causes of crime. Similarly, the Opposition wants to see the Government show its bona fides in providing some genuine support for parents and genuine support for victims of crime. It is all very well for the Government to put forward a legislative framework for victim offender conferencing. However, at the same time it withdraws the services to victims of crime through cutting the funding to the program that services them, namely, the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program.

Accordingly, this Bill is one that does not deserve the support of the House. It is a disappointing Bill. It is a Bill that demonstrates, among other things, just how profoundly out of touch this Government is in respect of the real issues confronting youth. It demonstrates that this Government has learned nothing from the voice of youth, which has been speaking with increasing concern about the issues that confront young people and their families. This Bill is an attempt to use law and order slogans and the legislative big stick to achieve some political outcome. It will certainly not contribute to a lessening in crime and it will certainly not contribute to the provision of assistance for young people and their families throughout Queensland. Accordingly, I urge all members of this House to reject this Bill.

Mr RADKE (Greenslopes) (4.42 p.m.): I speak in support of the Juvenile Justice Legislation Amendment Bill 1996. The amendments are long overdue and have community support. Firstly, clause 4 of the Bill amends section 4 of the Juvenile Justice Act by adding the following new principles: that the community must be protected from offences; that a victim of an offence committed by a child should be given the opportunity to participate in the process of dealing with the child for the offence in a manner allowed by law; that a child's parent should be encouraged to fulfil the parent's responsibility

for the child's care and supervision and supported in his or her efforts to fulfil this responsibility; and that a child who commits an offence should be dealt with in a way that strengthens the child's family.

I take up the principle that a child's parent should be encouraged to fulfil the parent's responsibility for the child's care and supervision, namely, domestic supervision. Domestic supervision is covered by section 280 of the Criminal Code, which states—

> "It is lawful for a parent or a person in the place of a parent or for a schoolmaster or master, to use, by way of correction, towards a child, pupil, or apprentice, under the person's care such force as is reasonable under the circumstances."

Those members who seek legal notation on precedent cases relating to section 280 of the Queensland Criminal Code should consult the authoritative work, *Carter's Criminal Law of Queensland*, which states—

> "The character and amount of the punishment that can be recognised as lawful will vary with the age, sex and apparent physical condition of the child.
>
> In R v Terry (1955) VLR 114 Sholl J pointed out that there are strict limits to the right of a parent to inflict reasonable and moderate corporal punishment on his or her child for the purpose of correcting the child in wrong behaviour. Such limits are: (I) the punishment must be moderate and reasonable; (2) it must have a proper relation to the age, physique and mentality of the child; (3) it must be carried out with a reasonable means or instrument. Therefore a parent of an infant girl of nineteen months of age, or a person authorised by the parent, is not lawfully entitled to administer any physical punishment to her except of the very slightest description.
>
> For an example of unreasonable parental correction, see R v Miller (1951) VLR 346; (1951) ALR 749, citing R v Griffin (1869) 11 Cox CC 402 (where a father was convicted of the manslaughter of his child aged two and a half years).
>
> In Smith v O'Byrne (1894) 5 QLJ 126 it was held that a schoolmaster may lawfully inflict moderate corporal punishment commensurate with the offence upon a scholar appreciating the punishment. If he exceeds the bounds of moderation, either in the manner, the instrument or the quantity of the punishment, he is answerable for an assault.
>
> In White v Weller; Ex parte White (1959) Qd R 192 the Full Court held, inter alia, that while prima facie punishment inflicted by blows on the head is unreasonable, the magistrate was entitled to find that the slaps on the face were not hard blows and did not amount to boxing the boy's ears and were not likely to, and in fact did not, cause him any injury.
>
> See also Sparkes v Martin (1908) 2 QJPR 12, where a conviction was quashed as there was no evidence that the punishment was excessive or that the schoolmaster had acted improperly.
>
> The mere existence of marks and blows on a child is not evidence of unreasonable chastisement: Byrne v Hebden (1913) St R Qd 233; (1913) QWN 51; (1913) 7 QJPR 112. The right of a schoolmaster to inflict reasonable corporal punishment upon his pupil is a delegation of the parental right, and is not limited to acts done in the school precincts but may extend to acts done while on the way to and from school in breach of a reasonable school rule. See Cleary v Booth (1893) I QB 465, and R v Newport (Salop) Justices (1929) 2 KB 416; (1929) 28 Cox CC 658. See also Mansell v Griffin (1908) 1 KB 160 and 947.
>
> As to the effect of regulations restricting the right of a master to cane a pupil, see Connor v Macdonald (1912) 6 QJP 119 (Mag Case).
>
> A statement by a medical practitioner, that he considers that an amount of force had been used to cause bruises such as would be unreasonable on account of the child's age, is not expert evidence on a matter of medical science but a statement of opinion on a matter of law and therefore inadmissible: Armat v Little (1909) St R Qd 83; (1909) QWN 15; (1909) 3 QJPR 21. Evidence of previous treatment of the child by the parents and the history of the relationship between child and parents was held to have been rightly admitted in R v Drake (1902) 22 NZLR 478; 5 GLR 145. See also McClintock v Noffke (1936) St R Qd 73; (1936) 30 QJPR 45.
>
> For the relevant common law, see Smith v O'Byrne; R v Hopley (1860) 2 F&F 202 (where a schoolmaster was convicted of manslaughter for causing the death of a pupil by undue punishment); English and Empire Digest Vol 15, 826.

> The ill-treatment, neglect, and abandonment or exposure of children is punishable under the Children's Services Act 1965-1982, s 69, but sub-s (5) of that section preserves the right of a parent, guardian, teacher or other person having lawful charge of a child to administer reasonable punishment to such child."

Therefore, these amendments to the juvenile justice legislation are in agreement with the Queensland Criminal Code in relation to child supervision. These juvenile justice legislation amendments require the behavioural change of not only juveniles but also their parents. In particular, clause 22 of the Bill inserts a proposed new section 56A in the Juvenile Justice Act. This provision gives effect to Judge McGuire's recommendation that a court should have legal coercive power to compel parents to attend proceedings where their child appears before the court charged with an offence. There is no requirement in the proposed legislation that a court must be satisfied that a parent has neglected a child or has failed to exercise proper parental control over a child before the court will be able to order the parent of a child to attend court proceedings. Under proposed new section 56A (6), failure by a parent to comply with a notice directing the parent to attend makes a parent liable to a maximum penalty of 50 penalty points, or $3,750. Parents will also be required by the court to pay compensation for their child's offence.

These amendments have community support in that victims are disgusted by seeing offending juveniles get off scot-free. Furthermore, these amendments will require parents to take an active role in supervising their child's conscience in respecting other people's property. Clause 107 amends section 20 of the Childrens Court Act by adding members of the mass media to the category of persons the Childrens Court may permit to be present relating to a child before a magistrate.

All the amendments that I have mentioned are designed to compel parents to take charge of their child's supervision and to compel the child to be responsible for his or her actions. Therefore, I hope that Queensland police officers will charge repeat offenders in order to drive the message home: respect one's neighbour's property and life. I commend this Bill to the House. It contributes to the wellbeing of the decent citizens of Queensland.

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (4.52 p.m.): I rise to oppose this Bill, but clearly I first have to make some comment about the contribution just made by the member for Greenslopes. Quite frankly, I think he has just out-manoeuvred the Attorney-General with his clear knowledge and understanding of important precedents in the law. I do not think I have ever quoted quite so many legal references in any of the cases I ran before industrial tribunals. I must say that much of what those cases is about escapes me.

We need to have a good look at whether or not this particular piece of legislation has any chance of solving the problem. We must all accept that there is a problem with juvenile crime and the community is looking for effective solutions; it is not looking for rhetoric. As a Parliament we must not fall into the trap of simply espousing rhetoric that, at the end of day, will not work. The result will be that the community will be even more frustrated with the law makers who are not able to come forward with practical solutions, and it will be even more frustrated because we have simply indulged in a game of rhetoric instead of attempting to address the problem, which certainly does exist. The problem needs addressing, but the solutions cannot be quick-fix solutions. In fact, I would suggest that the real solution is not a quick-fix solution; it is one that we have to put even more effort into over the medium and long term if we are going to get on top of the problem rather than see it get much worse.

It is essential that juveniles be handled with care and compassion. They must be handled appropriately and we cannot treat them as small adults who are crooks. We need to reform the young people who fall into bad company or stray onto the wrong side of the law. We need to pull them back to be good, corporate citizens. We will not do that if we drive them further into the criminal justice system by treating them as criminals.

I suggest to the House that, under the legislation that the Labor Party had enacted when in Government, there were appropriate powers for the police to deal with these problems. To put that into context, not only is it necessary for the police to have the appropriate powers to deal with the problem but it is also most important that police in the field have the will to follow through and that the courts have the will to follow through. I think the great bulk of police officers do a damn fine job and I know that many of them are very frustrated with the problems that they run into in the field. However, now that I am the shadow spokesman for Police and Corrective Services, far too many constituents ring me—people who live far from my own

electorate—with cases where police officers have said to them, "We cannot address this problem. There is nothing we can do because they are kids. We cannot pick them up or take action, and if we do it creates too much paperwork. At the end of the day, they will simply get a slap on the wrist and they will be back on the streets tomorrow, laughing at us."

We need to ensure that our Police Service understands what the law is and that police officers with the appropriate powers go into the community where young people are clearly doing the wrong thing, if they are really crook kids, to bring those children to justice. They have to do that through the system and in a manner that gives those young people the opportunity to correct themselves. These kids must not simply be sucked into the criminal justice system to remain there for the rest of their lives.

What concerns me about this Bill, to put it in colloquial terms, is that it is a "hit the kids over the head" Bill. It hits them over the head, locks them up and treats them as bad kids. It does not offer real solutions. As my colleague the member for Yeronga has already said, it is very easy to talk tough, but I do not think it is good enough for us to come into this place and simply talk tough or put legislation on the books that sounds tough when we all know that that is not the correct thing to do. We have to address the real problem. I know the real problem is not an easy one to fix, because the real problem is high unemployment levels and the fact that young people do not have appropriate skills or training.

When one talks to high school students, particularly those in my electorate where things are pretty tough because of high unemployment levels, one can see that they do not have any hope. They say, "We are going through school but, although we may be able to get a place at TAFE, we do not have any confidence that we are going to get a job or get the sort of job that we want." In effect, they have an enormous lack of self-esteem. Kids do not like themselves. They do not believe that society has looked after them and they do not believe that they owe society anything. Therefore, they have no respect for themselves and no respect for society. Hence they have no respect for other people's property, particularly when they feel that they are in the have-nots category and they have been short-changed by our society.

Mrs Bird: The "no future" syndrome.

Mr BARTON: The "no future" syndrome. The point that the member for Whitsunday makes is dead correct. Kids must be given opportunities to develop. We must develop their self-esteem. In my view, it is absolutely essential that we have job creation programs and training opportunities. We have to give these young people a hand up rather than a hit over the head.

I am concerned that people such as Senator Amanda Vanstone are not proposing but are actually cutting back training schemes and Skillshare funding. We do not have the sort of job creation opportunities that my colleague the member for Yeronga implemented when he was Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, such as the $150m jobs plan which created training opportunities for young people.

We make no apology for putting in place job creation programs that enabled young people to gain some work experience and self-esteem. They were given a pat on the back when they did a good job and were then able to look for other jobs because they had the necessary skills and self-esteem. They knew that they were as good as anybody else and that they could do the job if they wanted to. During the too short a period that I was the Minister for Environment and Heritage in this State, when I co-responsible for the Youth Conservation Corps, I met a lot of young people who had been minor offenders. For example, I met young people at places such as Green Island, where they were building walking tracks.

Mr Lingard interjected.

Mr BARTON: I was on Green Island looking at the national park and at what the kids in the Youth Conservation Corps were doing.

Mr Lingard: What about Hayman?

Mr BARTON: I certainly did not stay there. That is where Government members stay. Government members expect that everybody has their standards!

I looked at the work of the Youth Conservation Corps in the mountains north of Brisbane, where huge amounts of lantana had to be cut down to make way for walking tracks and viewing platforms. Those young people had found themselves on the wrong side of the law on occasions. Their self-esteem, their pride, the light in their eyes and the glow on their smiling faces reflect the worth of that program which we were running when in Government. Government members criticise some of our programs because they claim to have found some deficits. I would deficit finance such programs for the rest of my life if

it meant that young people received those training and work skill opportunities.

We need to bring back the community renewal programs. That would create jobs in areas such as mine—Eagleby, Beenleigh, Loganlea, the nearby suburbs of Woodridge and Kingston—and the many other suburbs and towns in Queensland. We need to bring back the community facilities programs. It looks as though the $1m for a youth drop-in centre in Beenleigh is going to be knocked on the head. The kids have raised thousands of dollars by holding dances and discos, with the support of the service groups in the region, because they want to have such a facility. Their community pride is such that they want to help their mates and give them the necessary hand up. Again, those programs are being cut by this Queensland Government.

Mr Lingard: Who said the Beenleigh one was going to be cut?

Mr BARTON: It is not good enough——

Mr Lingard: Who said it was going to be cut?

Mr BARTON: That has not been decided as yet, but we need no further evidence than everything else that is being cut by this Government. Why doesn't Mick Veivers come back from his little jaunt at the Olympics and tell us whether it will be cut?

Mr Lingard: Because it's not Mick Veivers' program.

Mr BARTON: Mick Veivers has been claiming it to be his program on radio over the past couple of weeks. I suggest that that is something that the Minister for Families needs to talk to Mick Veivers about, because he is the one who has been on radio in recent weeks saying that it is his program.

Mr Lingard: Who looks after the Beenleigh YACCA program?

Mr BARTON: I was the chairman of that scheme at the relevant time. As the Minister for Families knows, the YACCA program is funded by his department. However, in relation to the community facilities program, Mick Veivers has been claiming ownership as recently as in the past few weeks.

We need to come back to the real heart of the issue instead of dwelling on the mishmash arguments that there is a lack of pride or debating whose program it is, as we heard the Minister for Families doing. At the end of the day, I want to see dollars being spent on the young people in that region. In recent weeks, I have also travelled to many regional centres with the member for Yeronga. We have met community groups, youth workers, victims of crime groups, community groups that work with young people and local authorities, just to name some of them.

Amazingly, the Government says that it has consulted with people about this legislation. It held a number of meetings. I know that the Beenleigh meeting attracted about 20 people, two of whom were my spies—the rest were all the local National Party people. At the meetings that the member for Yeronga and I held at the centres that I was able to visit with him, the people who I thought may well have been harsh on young people—in light of the discussion paper that had been circulated by the Attorney-General—were quite critical of these proposals. I thought they might have been harsh on young people and that they would say that we needed to toughen up. In fact, quite the opposite was the case.

I suggest to all members of the Government that they look at what the Cairns City Council is doing, for example. That council is putting in place some programs in which young people can become involved. This is similar to what old Clem Jones has been doing for years at the Carina Youth Centre. It is about getting young people involved in positive activity so that they are not footloose and in places where they are likely to get into trouble.

It is very easy for people to say that these young people should be smartened up. However, it is a different story when it is the child of such people who is picked up for doing the wrong thing. My experience is that people who have been very vocal about the Government needing to be tougher on young people and juvenile crime are some of the same people who, regrettably, come through my office door when their youngsters have been picked up and say, "This isn't fair, because little Johnnie or Jill is really a good kid, and he or she shouldn't be put through the hoops." There is something desperately wrong with a society that wants to enact the sort of legislation that we have before us today, because our first priority as people, as legislators and as MPs should be to give these kids a hand up, not to try to bash them down. The priority should be providing jobs and training.

I wish to speak about some of the proposals in this legislation that offend me the most. I strongly support the shadow Attorney-General in his stand on the issue of fingerprinting and palm printing juveniles when

they are given an attendance notice rather than arrested. This is a broad police power, and it should be looked at in that context. As a member of the second PCJC, I and others trooped around every State in this nation and New Zealand looking at the police powers issues in a broad sense. People have not been prepared to give that power to the police even in the context of adults, yet when we should have some compassion and not want to draw young people into the criminal justice system, what is this Government proposing? It is proposing to treat kids like bigger criminals than the adult criminals to whom we allow freedom from being fingerprinted unless they have been arrested.

I do not think it is good enough for us to treat young people in this way. I do not think it is good enough to treat adults in that way, either. If this Government does come back later and try to put that power into the hands of police in respect of adults, I will be just as strong in my opposition to that. The issue needs to be spelled out. The Government wants to give police that power even though they do not currently have it for adults, whether they are either given an attendance notice or whether they are going to be charged on summons rather than arrest.

Another aspect that offends me greatly that I think needs to be rejected is the issue of the use of caution notices when kids are being sentenced for later offences. Again, we do not do that with respect to adults. When kids are given a caution notice, that does not mean that they are guilty. That means that some police officer has believed that there is a reasonable suspicion of their being guilty, and rather than putting them through the hoops they are given a caution. I am not opposed to kids being given cautions. I received a couple of cautions when I was a young fellow by a few friendly police officers. I think that probably helped to straighten me out a bit. I make the point that that was back in the days when the legal drinking age was 21, and it was illegal for a 17-year-old or 18-year-old to have a beer.

Mr Fouras: You know what's going to happen now, of course. They won't accept the caution. They'll just go to court and take their chances in the court, and clog up the courts.

Mr BARTON: That could well be the case. However, we need to come back to the issue. It is not appropriate that young people who have not been found guilty of anything can be given a caution and that caution can be used against them at a later date. There should not be a presumption of guilt because they have been given a caution. That is clearly unfair.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr BARTON: I will just make this comment and then I will move to a couple of other points. Too many people sitting on the other side of the House have forgotten what they were like when they were teenagers. Not every member opposite is as pure as the driven snow. I am reminded of that classic saying: let he who is without sin cast the first stone. If all members were honest and looked back, they would say, "Hey, there are a few times when I got a cuff over the ear when I did something wrong." The fact that we are all here means that we did not fall into a life of crime, for if we had we would not be eligible to be elected to this place. But let us not forget that at times young people need a bit of a caution or a helping hand. I like to think back to the sixties, because that was a great era. I had an offer of four jobs when I left high school. These days, there are 400 kids for every job that is on offer. It is a very different world out there. I would not like to be a teenager today, and we should understand that and not jam our values down young people's throats.

To return to the Bill—I note that the responsibility for juvenile detention centres is to be transferred to the Corrective Services Commission. As the shadow Corrective Services Minister I usually like to increase my area of influence, but I do not support this move. As the member for Yeronga has already spelt out, it would be quite improper to allow the culture of the correctional centre—if you like, the culture of the prison—to be engendered into juvenile detention centres. I suggest that we will rue the day that we allow that to happen. We should be treating young offenders differently—not locking them into the criminal justice system, not introducing them to the culture that will, over time, inevitably creep into juvenile detention centres if they are under the control of the commission because of the interchange of ideas and the interchange of people. Some kids will pick up bad habits and become even worse rather than being given a hand to get out of the criminal justice arena altogether.

I am very concerned also about the proposal to impose penalties on parents. Many of the families in my electorate are dysfunctional, the parents earn a very low income and they frequently rely only on social security payments. If such parents are fined because they do not front up for their child's

court appearance or if a compensation order is made against them——

Time expired.

Mrs WILSON (Mulgrave) (5.13 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Juvenile Justice Amendment Bill 1996. I believe that the people of Queensland will cheer from the treetops, their business premises and their homes at the changes that are being introduced. These amendments are but a cost-effective first step in dealing with the problems of juvenile crime—a category of crime which has people absolutely at their wit's end as to what to do. I agree with the member for Waterford. He is quite right. People are looking for solutions. These are early-stage solutions.

Any changes bring about genuine concerns. However, for those people who have expressed concerns regarding certain aspects of the amendments, the Minister has stated that the changes will be monitored carefully over the next 12 months with the intention of re-examining the Act over that period of review. So the amendments are timely. With other amendments, the changes in the Bill will ensure that the courts and police have adequate and appropriate powers. Currently, the police feel that their hands are tied when dealing with some juvenile offenders. The situation has evolved in which many juveniles simply give a thumbs-up to the police or to the courts knowing that, up until now, they have held the trump card. The hardworking police feel very frustrated in their efforts. I have talked to them about this, and they have told me of their frustration. To attend a public meeting at which police openly say that they can do nothing about juvenile crime is not a nice experience. That is what is occurring at the moment. That is exactly what the police are saying, because they cannot do anything.

The question must be asked: why have the citizens of Queensland had to endure break-ins, vandalism and group bashings for so long? The answer is that members opposite did not provide the infrastructure for youngsters, and they therefore have nothing else to do. Many youngsters have very low self-esteem—a point which has been made by members opposite—they have nothing to do all day and all night, and juvenile crime is the result. There is no doubt that our unemployed youth need support and training, and this Government will provide just that. But the community is sick and tired of bearing the brunt of juvenile vandalism, attacks and crime. The community is now asking for the right to be safe and to feel safe.

I have listened to a juvenile offender say at a public meeting that she committed offences to get a buzz and to merely watch the police give chase. That is the sort of thing that is occurring at the moment.

Mr Fouras: Because they're bored.

Mrs WILSON: Exactly—young people are bored, because when they had the chance members opposite did not give them anything to do.

Only two weeks ago, the township of Gordonvale met to discuss the incidence of crime and vandalism in the town, which has been increasing over the last few months. The meeting was attended by the local chamber of commerce, the police, local government representatives and the community. Interestingly enough, one of the suggestions was a call for a curfew. I know what those on the other side would say about that. The very next weekend, what happened? The town was vandalised by young people yet again. Now the citizens are extremely angry. They are angry because the perception is that if the perpetrators are caught nothing will happen to them, because the police say that their hands are tied.

In some instances in Cairns, I am told that the criteria for belonging to certain juvenile clubs is for new members to produce stolen items—items which have been paid for by hardworking shop proprietors. It is no wonder that the statistics for shoplifting are so high. That is how once again young people are getting a buzz. Given that some parents have completely abandoned their responsibility to their children, it is no wonder that some groups of young children—who naturally focus together and bond to build up their self-esteem, particularly when their families have rejected them—find their way into juvenile crime. The fact of the matter is that something must be done, firstly to protect our citizens from the perpetrators of crime and to ensure their safety and, secondly, to stop the track of the juvenile offender to a life of adult crime. The latter situation is a fact: many juvenile offenders simply roll on to a life of adult crime. The Labor Party did very little to ensure that this did not happen to young people.

Mrs Bird: Some.

Mrs WILSON: I said "some".

Mrs Bird: You said "many".

Mrs WILSON: It could be many; we will get the figures.

Given alternatives, I believe that juveniles who have found themselves following a life of

petty crime for whatever reason—and I realise that many young people have been pushed into it by the lack of support from home—will track on to mending their ways, rehabilitate and eventually become sound community members.

There have been criticisms that the amendments may adversely discriminate against children. I ask: what about the potential victims and the actual victims of crime? Do they also not need consideration? It is unfair and unjust not to have guidelines set that all people are aware of, so that each and every person plays by the same rules. If the rules are broken and the perpetrators know the rules, then some positive action needs to be taken. As the saying goes out there in the community: if you are old enough to do it, you are old enough to cop it. That is just how some community members feel.

I mentioned the role of the parent. It is the intention of this Government to strengthen and emphasise the role of the parents of juvenile offenders and ensure that they become responsible for their youngsters. Family bonding will go a long way toward developing the self-esteem of young people. These amendments will see compensation orders to a maximum of $5,000 imposed on parents. In some instances, but certainly not in all cases, parents may be compelled to attend court with their juvenile. While all parents cannot be forced to be present at court proceedings involving their child, one must ask whether it is too much to ask that a parent of a youngster supports that youngster. I believe not. I recognise that a complete breakdown in a family relationship could cause hardship and dysfunction for all. However, a youngster needs the support of a family member, even if the support is imposed legislation. The current legislation is not workable, and the proposed amendments will be welcomed by all victims and generally by the community at large.

The New Zealand experience on conferencing, which is a genuinely innovative approach to juvenile justice and creates a niche between standard police cautions and appearances in court, has been a successful initiative. Conferencing between the perpetrator and victims has been successful, and research shows that families have benefited from conferencing. Indications are that indeed the family, the young person and also the victim, have benefited. While there are currently no formal family conference programs in Queensland, limited trial projects have been undertaken by Queensland police in conjunction with the Education Department. Of course, both parties will need to concur, and their consent must be given for the conferencing procedure.

The procedure is a step which will be used instead of a criminal process. Police and the courts will be able to refer certain matters for conferencing. For the protection of both parties, a provision exists for confidentiality procedures. While in Australia most of the conferencing has been carried out with young white people, there is no indication that the approach could not be successful with cultural family groups within our society. Marie Dyhberg has found that, measurably, the New Zealand experience in family conferencing has led to a decrease in the number of young people appearing before the Youth Court from 13,000 to 1,800 per year. This is a point that should not be overlooked.

Police stand to gain with the introduction of the fingerprinting and palm printing procedures in the amendments. The mere sight of a cane at school stood as a reminder to youngsters years ago, and perhaps the fingerprinting issue will have the same effect. If the effect is to deter young people from crime, then so be it. Of course, the prints will be destroyed should no sentence order be made.

It is not the intent of this Government to have children held in a watch-house or police station unnecessarily. However, the introduction of fingerprinting and palm printing will, I believe, act as a deterrent. The Bill will provide a police officer with the power to arrest a juvenile for a serious offence. This provision will be welcomed by a good proportion of the community. If juveniles are aware of this, it may—and I say "may", but indeed I sincerely hope that it will—act as a deterrent to a future life of crime for the perpetrator. The community has long been waiting for some amendments to sentencing powers and will welcome the amendments dealing with the increases in community service hours and penalties. For too long these penalties have been a joke to the community, and offenders have treated them as such.

The member for Yeronga alluded to the fine work done by Grafton Arts. This is the very sort of thing that is happening in the community in Cairns. I had the honour of engaging the first coordinator of that particular group, Marie Pert, who has done wonderful things. That is what is keeping the young people out of gaols.

A sentence for a crime is a sentence. Many Queenslanders have been calling for a serious look at sentencing procedures in this State. The proposed amendments on sentencing powers will be welcomed. Life

sentences are now being proposed and will be made available to courts for murder, whereas previously the maximum penalty was 14 years. What a joke—commit a murder at a young age and then be out in a few years! Is it any wonder that the community at large is fed up and angry? Is it not better to prevent the crime by offering solutions with some means of prevention before the crime is committed? That is what these amendments do. This Government is giving young people a second chance. Young people who, for whatever reason, have committed a misdemeanour will be given an opportunity to make some sort of amends and to start again. We are not, however, just smacking them on the wrist and turning a blind eye. Repeat and hardened offenders will be dealt with accordingly. How many repeats of a misdemeanour would people find acceptable? That is what has been happening. The system has become a joke, and young people have recognised that.

Many of our young people have absolutely no direction. Many have no goals and, by default, they fall into a life of petty juvenile crime and then adult crime, and their lives are lost. So I support the amendments with the hope that victims will feel that there is some support out there for them, the community will feel that there is a process of action should a crime be committed, and the young perpetrators can be dealt with and cautioned as a precaution prior to their being placed in gaol.

In far-north Queensland women feel unsafe to walk at night. Recently, the media reported a group bashing of a female. The community is fed up with the fact that juvenile perpetrators are not paying for their actions in some way. The Government is saying loudly to Queenslanders that juvenile crime will not pay. I support the proposed amendments.

Mrs WOODGATE (Kurwongbah) (5.23 p.m.): Tonight I would like to speak about one particular aspect of this Bill before the House, that is, the transfer of responsibility for juvenile detention centres to the Corrective Services Commission. This is not a new proposal. It is one that has been rejected every time it has been examined before—even by the National Party, when it formed a Government without the benefit of its Liberal colleagues. In 1988 the Kennedy report of the committee of review into Corrective Services examined whether Corrective Services should run the juvenile detention centres. The Penalties and Sentences Review Committee, which was established by the then Government and to which the Kennedy report referred, recommended—

> "It is the view of the Committee that juvenile offending is a particular problem strongly related to other problems of youth. Programs targeted to youth in the context of the family and community are also specialised and have much in common. Because of the need to continue the move towards co-ordination of programs and services at this level, responsibility for juvenile corrections should not be transferred away from the Department of Family Services."

The then National Party endorsed this recommendation. So what has changed?

The issue was subsequently considered again in 1993 during the PSMC review of the Queensland Corrective Services Commission. The PSMC found that there was no convincing rationale for the transfer of responsibilities for juveniles from Family Services to the Corrective Services Commission. In January 1995—last year—the then Labor Government commenced an examination of the location of the juvenile justice function and concluded in the report brought down in March of that year that, of the seven options that had been identified, only one—and that is the one which is now the policy of this coalition Government—was without real advantage for the Government, the Corrective Services Commission, juvenile offenders themselves or the wider community.

At that time the Corrective Services Commission could provide no costings to the review. Many of its ideas were based on a lack of understanding about the special needs of juvenile offenders, and it proposed things which would not even be acceptable for adult prisoners. For example, all of the Queensland Corrective Services Commission proposals were based on the idea that at any one time there would be at least 30 young offenders in WORC-style, that is, western outreach camp-style camps—both sentenced prisoners and those on remand. Adult prisoners on remand—who, after all, have not been found guilty—are not sent to such camps, but apparently young people have fewer rights than adults. Prisoners on remand have to be able to see their lawyers. That is one of the main reasons that adult offenders are ineligible for such camps. Apparently the Queensland Corrective Services Commission believes that unsentenced young people have less need for legal advice and representation. The QCSC did not work out how those youngsters were to continue their education.

Apparently they were to be picked up and dropped out into the bush with no thought to their education, their legal needs, their continuing family contact or rehabilitation.

The capital costs, based on the adult model—and that may be an inappropriate model in the case of juveniles—of creating a 15-bed WORC camp are at least $500,000. The operational costs are around $1m per year. So even using the costs required for adult prisoners, the juvenile WORC camps would cost $3m in the first year. That does not take into account the increased costs of supervising juvenile prisoners where the staff ratio is much more intensive, and there are additional requirements to provide education, training, family visits and counselling.

The QCSC was going to get this money by closing the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Detention Centre. I fully support the closure of that youth detention centre. But will the Sir Leslie Wilson centre be closed? What has happened to the new youth detention centre being constructed at Wacol? Is it on hold like many other Labor plans? If the plans put into place when I was fortunate enough to be the relevant Minister had been carried through, the new centre at Wacol would be half completed. The Government faces a dilemma of its own making. There is no money for the WORC camps unless the Sir Leslie Wilson centre is closed. If it is closed, a new centre must be constructed or the John Oxley centre massively expanded. The Treasurer, Mrs Sheldon, has put a stop to new construction. What will the Queensland Corrective Services Commission do?

I predict that the operation of adult and juvenile facilities will inevitably merge. While the facilities may be separate in name and, for the time being, even in location, over time the management and staffing will become interchangeable. The specialist skills needed to deal effectively with juvenile offenders will be lost. In the end it will be the community that pays. Shortsighted, short-term cost cutting will cost us all more in the long run.

It is worth while to reflect for a few minutes on why we have separate juvenile and adult systems. We have had them since the 1860s, with the passage of the Industrial and Reformatory Act of 1865. I remember it well! That Act provided for children under 15 years to be committed to reformatories if they were unmanageable, incorrigible or had criminal tendencies, or to industrial schools if they were neglected children. That sounds like Queensland in 1996! A separate Childrens Court was established in 1907, with children on remand being placed in welfare institutions or with respectable people. But this represented a shift in philosophy from a punishment to a welfare approach, with the needs of the child being the paramount consideration. By the 1930s the welfare approach was firmly established, with imprisonment being used only for the most serious offences.

In 1957 a parliamentary inquiry into youth problems produced the Dewar report, which argued for early intervention by trained welfare workers for children and their families. The Children's Services Act 1965 introduced a new code stressing the need for supervision and treatment of offenders. Although that Act deals with offending, neglected and disturbed children, the approach was predominantly psychological, with many children being psychiatrically assessed.

Over the next two decades, it became apparent that treatment as such was not successful, but it was also clear that young people need to face the consequences of their behaviour in ways that have relevance to them and their stage of maturity. I think we agree—being all reasonable people in this place—that most of the problems being encountered by young people have their beginnings in poverty, unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse and family breakdown. A statement of which I am quite fond and which I have written on a few of my books at home is "Poverty is the parent of revolution and crime." That was written by Aristotle in 437 BC. Even back then it was fashionable to say that poverty and unemployment were to blame for problems with juveniles. Juvenile crime is not caused by lenient laws or soft detention centres. Coordinated approaches that attack the root causes of crime are needed, not the fragmented, piecemeal, ad hoc mess that the coalition is proposing with three separate departments having responsibility for juvenile offenders.

There are effectively two models of juvenile justice practice: the welfare model and the justice model. The welfare model is associated with treatment rather than punishment, with the criminal behaviour of children being seen as entirely attributable to dysfunctional elements in their environment. The justice model assumes that all individuals are reasoning agents who are responsible for their actions and so should be held accountable before the law. Clearly, neither approach is fully applicable to children who have broken the law. In the early 1990s, the Queensland Government recognised that legislation was required to achieve a balance

that hitherto had been lacking between the justice model and the welfare model. The Juvenile Justice Act 1992 and the Childrens Court Act 1992 are founded on the belief that young people who offend should be brought to account for their actions in a manner that recognises that they are children and prone to impulsive acts that, with proper and appropriate action, might never be repeated.

The Queensland laws are not unique in recognising the fundamental differences between child and adult offenders. An Australian Law Reform Commission report, Sentencing Young Offenders, states—

> "There is almost universal acceptance of the principle that juveniles are not to be equated with adults. It is part of the modern wisdom that children progress through a number of developmental stages and that, during these stages, children think, act and feel differently from adults. Therefore it is regarded as unrealistic and unjust to uphold them to the same standards and or treat them in the same way even though ultimately they will be expected to adhere to adult law abiding values."

Statistics show that the majority of children grow out of crime. I think it is very important that we all know that 85 per cent of youngsters who are cautioned by police never come to the attention of the law again. Approximately two-thirds of young people who appear in court do so only once. If young people go off the tracks but are caught in time and are able to receive the support they need, very, very few reoffend.

The services that work for adults will not be effective for juveniles because their needs are different. Juveniles need a personalised approach, which requires a much lower client-to-staff ratio. They need supervision by adults who can become role models and assist them to understand the consequences of their actions. They do not need warders and gaolers; they need assistance and counselling in a family environment, not just locking away in a Corrective Services facility. It is that specialisation that is threatened by the coalition's proposal to trisect juvenile justice. It is an uncoordinated, incoherent policy that will not reduce juvenile offending and will ultimately cost the community dearly. I support the member for Yeronga in opposing this Bill.

Mr CARROLL (Mansfield) (5.35 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Bill. The people of Queensland know that stern legislation is required to deal with juvenile crime. I am pleased to be part of the National/Liberal coalition Government that has moved quickly to produce the Bill that is before us tonight. We all support strong discipline in homes and schools. We know that that is essential and we know that that must be backed up in the community by strong legislation. I reject the claims of the member for Kurwongbah, who spoke about a need for more social workers and more counselling instead of solid laws. We know that police officers are pretty frustrated with the way the Goss Government swept commonsense rules off the table in this area of justice. In my personal view, these amendments do not go far enough, but they are a most helpful start and I urge honourable members to support them.

The tight laws that are contained in this Bill will give young people narrower parameters within which to be raised and trained. This Bill goes a long way towards helping them to be people who play a meaningful role in our society. It is a sad day when we have had to legislate to make parents responsible, and I refer to clause 62 of the Bill. I think that is a welcome advance. As Judge McGuire has commented, the previous section that that clause replaces had not been the subject of any orders against parents before because it required too heavy an onus of proof of the police.

I know from representing teenagers in the Childrens Court that some of those parents charged were often belligerently critical of the police. Those few parents would carp and whinge and have ways of creating excuses and manufacturing criticisms of police officers or officers from the Children Services Department. In later years, they did the same with the Department of Families. It is an unfortunate situation that today a very small minority exists of those types of parents who are perhaps not worthy of that title. They set bad examples by their own behaviour and their expressed attitudes. They train their offspring to be irresponsible and insolent vandals. Therefore, I think that clause 62 of the Bill will be a measure for dealing with that type of influence.

When we haul on the reins and give less room for those types to move, we cop the style of criticism levelled at the Minister for Justice this week in my local newspaper by that so-called protector of people's rights, Terry O'Gorman. If he was properly reported, his remarks cause concern among middle Australians, whom the Labor radicals forgot in their haste to follow half-baked ideas and allow young criminals to get the idea that the law would not crack down on them. In the past six years or so, we have seen that errant kids can

become untouchables. This Bill is designed to rein in that problem.

Mr Foley: If they are untouchables, how come there are more children in juvenile detention centres than there were a few years ago?

Mr CARROLL: Contrary to the unrealistic and pessimistic predictions of the member for Yeronga, I have no doubt that these amendments will reap a reduction in juvenile crime. The claim of turning back the clock, which was espoused by the member for Yeronga, is a point of praise rather than a criticism. If we can turn back the clock to a time when young people respected the values that they now tend to want to ignore, I think we will be doing well.

When enacted, this Bill will give new hope to law enforcement agencies. I believe that it is a stiffening of the law that should not only deter youngsters from crime but also punish those who are not scared off in the first place. The member for Yeronga also suggested that this Bill takes away some hard-won gains from our society. I believe that we should tell him that the hard-won gains, such as safety from housebreaking and assault by juveniles, were being lost to violent and lawless hooligans. Hopefully, we can turn that tide of lawlessness.

I challenge Queensland's magistrates and judges to crack down on all law-breakers, especially juveniles. From my 20 years' experience as a lawyer, I have seen a soft and watery approach by our courts to the punishment of crime on some occasions. Parliament sets a range of penalties, but the courts have the responsibility to apply the law firmly, regardless of the expertise of the defence lawyer or perhaps the lack of expertise of some prosecution lawyers. Many times I felt that I enjoyed a remarkable success by honest and earnest submissions in mitigating penalties—particularly for young people whom we often argued should be given a second or third chance—but I always endorsed the penalty that was imposed by my own blunt warnings about the client's possible embarkation on a life of crime and the high costs of the next time, both in lawyers' fees or the sanctions that might be imposed by the court.

I am sure that that does not happen all the time. I think that it is up to the courts to be consistently firm. On top of that experience about which I have spoken, careful attention to public unrest over the last two years or so has shown me that much quicker headway in our fight against crime, especially juvenile crime, would be made if we can achieve two things: firstly, a much sterner application of penalties by our courts; and secondly, better publicity of the maximum penalties of all levels of crime. At the moment, instead of that it seems that crime often has us on the run. I am pleased that the member for Yeronga at least recognised that this Bill is a legislative big stick. I think that it will give law enforcers and the courts the means to bring our young people back into line—if the courts will enforce it.

At last July's election, Queenslanders took the significant step of changing the Government—the last movement of which was played out in the Mundingburra by-election and the events in this House on 20 February. I think that occurred for a couple of reasons, and of those the most prickly concern for our people was that of law enforcement. This Parliament is prompted by the new National/Liberal coalition Government to do something about it. We can amend the laws; I urge the courts to enforce them. We in this Parliament can do only so much. I believe that we are called to pass this Bill, and I therefore urge honourable members to support it.

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove) (5.42 p.m.): I am pleased to take part in this debate. When I was a shadow Minister in the late 1970s and early 1980s, I used to argue against the welfare model. At that time, the welfare model was based on the premise that children offend because elements of their environment are dysfunctional and so the appropriate response is to seek to protect them from those elements. Under the welfare model, often children were not formally charged and were placed under the guardianship of the State. Of course, that led to children being treated more harshly than they would have been if they were adults.

In 1992, the Labor Government introduced the Juvenile Justice Bill. Under that model, the concept was that individuals were accountable for their actions and should face the due process of the law and suffer appropriate punishment. Through this Bill, we have a political campaign rather than a Bill that is trying to meet the social needs of our society. I refer to the press release of 29 May 1996. It states—

> "The previous government declared juvenile untouchables. Police were frustrated in their inability to act and offenders laughed at the law when they walked away with a slap on the wrist."

In common with the member for Mulgrave, the media release went on to say that the community has said "enough" and

that we cannot just let juveniles walk the streets breaking into houses, stealing cars and damaging property at will.

In its submission to this Government, the Youth Advocacy Centre said quite unequivocally—

> "These statements are completely untrue and it is a matter of concern that the general community is being wickedly misled."

That is a very good choice of words—"wickedly misled". If members looked at section 120 of the Juvenile Justice Act 1992, which related to sentencing options for young people, they would see that they are not significantly different from the provisions contained in the Penalties and Sentences Act, which relates to adult offenders. Section 4 of the 1992 Act states that—

> "a child who commits an offence should be—
>
> (i) held accountable and encouraged to accept responsibility for the offending behaviour."

Section 4(c) states—

> "if a child commits an offence, the child should be treated in a way that diverts the child from the courts' criminal justice system"—

and the next part is relevant—

> "unless the nature of the offence and the child's criminal history indicate that a proceeding for the offence should be started."

So it is absolute nonsense for the member for Mulgrave to say that, under the current Act, the police do not have power. Of course they do. Secondly, police are able to prosecute any child aged 10 years and over who is suspected of having broken the law. Young people do not have any special protection in relation to police. Of course, they have section 36, which states that an adult must be present while a child is questioned by the police. Surely nobody would debate the need for that provision. Indeed, the police have a significant degree of power over a young person by which they are able to manipulate young people and influence their decisions and their cooperation. In relation to minor matters, such as offensive language, the police can decide to warn the child about his or her behaviour and send that child on his or her way or take him or her to court. If a young person under 17 years of age breaks the law, the police can decide to take that child to court or, if that child admits guilt, to caution that child. If the police decide to take a young person to court they can give that child an attendance notice or arrest and charge that person, which will entail taking the young person to the police station, and fingerprinting and photographing that young person if the police decide to charge that person. The police then decide whether to grant bail or hold that young person in custody. That is proof that the Juvenile Justice Act 1992 does not curtail police powers.

The rationale for the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act is that the Juvenile Justice Act obliges police to employ arrest procedures only in exceptional circumstances where they are unavoidable; also that the current police policy is to use arrest powers as sparingly as possible so far as juveniles are concerned. If members looked at sections 20(3) and 20(2) of the Act they would see that that is not true. Section 20 states—

> "(2) Despite sections 10 (Police officer to consider alternatives to proceeding against child)"—

and why should they not—

> "a police officer may arrest a child if the police officer believes on reasonable grounds that arrest is necessary—
>
> (a) to prevent a continuation or a repetition of the offence or the commission of another offence; or
>
> (b) to prevent concealment, loss or destruction of evidence relating to the offence.
>
> (3) Despite section 21 . . . a police officer may arrest a child if the arresting the police officer believes on reasonable grounds that the child is unlikely to appear before the Childrens Court."

What the Government is saying as its rationale for implementing these harsh powers is really a joke. It is about time that we looked at what the Government is doing. It is a political exercise to mislead the public in a wicked way. It is a political objective; not a social one.

I refer to the statistics relating to juvenile justice. According to the CJC, over the last few years the level of juvenile offending has remained reasonably constant. In 1995, the CJC reported that 1 per cent of all young people aged between 10 years and 15 years appear in court; and secondly, that a further 1 per cent are cautioned by the police. Are we about enforcing a more interventionist, punitive approach that will put more and more young people in detention centres? Are we about putting that 1 per cent of juvenile

offenders who are currently cautioned into detention centres? Let us see what would happen. Say we put 100 into detention centres. In that regard, we are talking about an extra cost of $10m a year. What could we do with that money? I will return to this point later in my speech with reference to prevention measures.

In 1993, Dr Ian Connor stated that juvenile offending is transitory, that is, most children grow out of offending. I challenge each member of this House to say that, in their youth, they did not at one stage or another behave in a way that would be considered delinquent. I have to admit that I could not pass that test. I ask all members whether they would pass that test and then to consider what this Government is doing in relation to this legislation. I think the situation is ludicrous.

It is my view that the principles of the current Juvenile Justice Act are adequate. I think that there are spurious reasons for the proposed amendment to section 4 of the Act. Under this legislation, the only diversionary tactic is the caution. In order to receive that, the child must go through the criminal justice system. Many children still go through the criminal court system and, as I said, the only special protection that they receive is under section 36 of the Act. Therefore, the Government has given spurious reasons for saying that we have to change this Act and make sure that the courts deal with these people in a proper way.

I turn to police cautions, because that is what concerns me the most about this piece of legislation. Members opposite have expressed a genuine concern—and I think it is a genuine concern—that the caution system has been used inappropriately. If that is the case, then the matter should be dealt with by appropriate police training. Simply, a caution is an outcome in itself. If the offence is serious enough to be referred to by courts in future proceedings, it is serious enough to form the basis of a charge in the first place. This relates to cautions involving offences committed by an adult which would attract a sentence of seven years or more—such things as property offences, car thefts and so on. This process will clog the courts.

A number of lawyers from youth legal services have said to me, "Following the passage of the amendment, lawyers will be advising children, particularly those under 15, not to accept cautions." That will be the outcome. The Government is saying that children will still go to court and the judge will not take into account their age or the negative effects of detention centres, so more and more of these "dreadful" young people will be put in detention centres. That is what the Government is doing.

I turn briefly to the youth conferencing system, which I applaud. It is a further diversionary tactic which the juvenile justice system can use. However, like community service orders and other schemes, it will only be effective if it is well resourced. I am concerned that it will not be resourced adequately enough, particularly as the Government will actually increase the hours under community service orders. The Government is not going to find the resources because it does not have the will to do so. The strategy will require a sufficient number of properly trained personnel working across the whole State, and not just in the population centres. Currently, resourcing is the issue to ensuring that probationary and community service are effective. Currently, those programs are not effective because they are underresourced.

The proposed changes do not set out in sufficient degree how the conference program will work. The guidelines are unclear; they must be clearly developed. For example, is a program seen to be a punishment and part of sentencing, or is it separate and part of rehabilitation? I hope it is rehabilitation. Currently the Police Service has a face-to-face conferencing program facilitated by police officers, usually the arresting officer. It is not clear in anything that the Attorney-General has said whether this program will cease as a result of legislation.

I turn now to clause 13, which increases the powers of police officers when arresting a child for a serious offence. Section 20 of the Act is amended to allow a court to regard as lawful the arrest of a child whom the police officer believed, on reasonable grounds, to be an adult. In deciding the matter the court must have regard to the apparent age of the child and the circumstances of the arrest. This change is made to protect the actions of police officers acting on a reasonable but mistaken belief that a child is an adult.

As I have said previously, the reality is that the police are not significantly restricted by sections 20 and 21. It seems to me that the only restriction is the requirement under section 36 that another person be present during the police interview. If a young person is arrested as an adult and their correct age becomes apparent, the court has the power to transfer the matter to an appropriate

jurisdiction. I do not believe that this is at all necessary. In relation to section 36, if the police are able to show that there was a proper and sufficient reason for the absence of a person mentioned in subsection 2 at the time the statement was made or given and the court considers that in the particular circumstances the statement should be admitted into evidence, then a statement made in the absence of an adult can be accepted in the court. The matter can be easily strengthened by introducing a police practice to inform anyone who appears to be in their late teens that it is important that they correctly state their age as, if they are under 17, they are entitled to have a non-police person present at the interview. I think that is very important.

Again, I think we are just adding dressing with these changes, because, as I have argued from the beginning, there is no doubt at all that the current provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act can work if there is proper training of police. The only problem we have is that, after Mrs Jones has been robbed, the police say to her, "I'm sorry, but we do not have the power to deal with these people." The police cop out, and I say that unequivocally. The police treat juvenile offences as a bit of a joke; it is kids' stuff. A lot of police officers want to get only the big, tough criminals and take them to court. Therefore, they tell Mrs Jones that they cannot do anything about it. They refuse to do their job and they blame the Act. We need to ensure that the police understand the system.

I agree with the shadow Attorney-General and the CJC's position on life sentences. To me, the suggestion that we should gaol a 14-year-old or a 15-year-old for life is quite offensive. What does that mean to a 14-year-old or 15-year-old? The current 14-year sentence is for a longer period than they have lived in the community. It is an inordinate amount of time. The Government cannot ignore the costs involved in the institutionalisation of such a child. It cannot ignore what such a sentence would mean to the child in terms of their ability to integrate into the community at a later date. Not having created social networks and friendships, how can these people be successfully released into the community? That is an appalling situation and I am sure the Opposition will be moving an amendment designed to prevent that.

I am also concerned about proposed section 56A, which empowers a court dealing with a child to order a parent of the child to attend the proceedings. This may be on the initiative of the court or upon an application by the prosecutor, and non-compliance could result in a penalty of 50 penalty units. The CJC has made a submission to the Government on this point, and again it appears that the Attorney-General does not want to take advice from the body which has the statutory obligation to liaise with Government departments about laws affecting the management of this State. The Government has ignored the CJC completely.

In today's paper, Frank Clair said that it was an appalling situation that the Government refused to consult with the CJC. The Government is not interested in good social policy or looking after the welfare of the people of Queensland. It wants a cheap political stunt and that is what this legislation is about. The Government wants to do that at the cost of families. In its submission, the CJC has stated—

> "Empowering the courts to compel parents to attend and to make compensation orders against them, is unlikely alone to assist parents to develop the skills they need to better communicate with and control their children.
>
> The CJC has grave concerns about the proposal to change the standards of proof required before an order for compensation can be made against the parents of juvenile offenders."

This proposal conflicts with the fundamental and basic right that in criminal proceedings there should be a standard of proof of beyond a reasonable doubt.

I turn now to the shortcomings of this Government's treatment of young people. This legislation fails to address the physical, social and educational needs of children which ensure the prevention of reoffending. As I have said before, State intervention in bringing children before the courts can clearly lead to homelessness. It is the homeless children who become involved in criminal activities such as property theft, car theft and drug addiction. We have a need for a child protection Act to complement this legislation, faulty as it may be. In New South Wales, programs have been implemented to try to break the juvenile crime cycle, such as the drug and alcohol program.

Debate, on motion of Mr Fouras, adjourned.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES, RURAL AND PROVINCIAL QUEENSLAND

Mr PALASZCZUK (Inala) (6 p.m.): I move—

"That this House—

(a) notes the withdrawal of services by State and Federal National/Liberal Governments is the single biggest issue affecting rural and provincial Queensland today; and

(b) censures the Borbidge/Sheldon Government for its inactivity and inability to redress the situation by not making adequate representations to the Federal Government and by not putting in place its own positive policies."

Rural Queensland is still reeling from the effects of the decline in the rural economy, the ongoing drought, rising costs of living and a lack of incentive and encouragement for workers who live and work in Queensland. When I talk of rural Queensland, I mean all people who live and work in rural Queensland—farmers, graziers, small-business people, the workers, retirees and miners. The single biggest issue that is affecting all of those people who live and work in rural Queensland is their concern about the withdrawal of services by both Governments and by the private sector.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I remind the member for Lockyer that the latest blight on rural communities in Queensland is the closure of the Westpac Bank at Clifton today. The people out there are really hurting, yet the honourable member is treating this notice of motion in a most frivolous manner. Shame on the member for Lockyer!

This begs the question: why does the National/Liberal Party Government not adopt a more caring and sympathetic attitude to the plight of rural Queensland? Sadly, this does not seem to be the case when one listens to some of the statements being uttered by leaders of both the Federal and State National/Liberal Governments. For example, let us take the arrogant statement by the Federal Primary Industries Minister that "there's no suggestion that the bush can in any way be quarantined from what must be done". The words "what must be done" refer to cuts to the rural sector.

Mr McGrady: He is the Deputy Leader of the Country Party.

Mr PALASZCZUK: He is the Deputy Leader of the National Party, or the Country Party, as it used to be.

The Queensland Liberal Treasurer is on record as saying that the "Howard Government will be good for Queensland". It has been good for her electorate.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr PALASZCZUK: The member for Lockyer asks: how good is it for rural Queensland? That question has been answered by the Minister for Natural Resources, who at a rural crisis conference in Toowoomba last weekend said, "Don't blame us for the Federal Government." What a contrast to the Labor Government's achievements over the past six years! For years, the former National Party Government allowed overstocking and land degradation in south-west Queensland. The Labor Government introduced the south-west strategy to make properties more viable and to give graziers a chance to sell out or expand. The National Party procrastinated over the Bundaberg irrigation scheme for 20 years. It took the Labor Government three years to get that scheme in place. The Labor Government undertook a complete revamp of the sugar industry to make it a bigger and more efficient industry than ever before. As a direct result, the sugar industry is employing more people now than ever before. For years, the National Party Government neglected the Atherton Tableland, which relied mainly on tobacco growing for its source of income. The Labor Government changed that by putting in place a strategy for diversification, and now we are on the threshold of seeing a new and thriving sugar industry on the tablelands. Just this year, 400,000 tonnes of cane was produced on the tablelands and a new mill is being planned. The Labor Government revamped courthouses in Queensland to provide a better service for rural Queensland. The Labor Government also put in place a strategy to ensure that people in rural Queensland were given a decent water supply—something that was never given to them by the National Party Government.

Let us have a look at the track record of members opposite till now. In a statement yesterday, the Minister for Local Government claimed that cottage industries are working from the verandas of western Queensland homes, and cited the emu industry as the one and only example. I would not like to have an emu industry working from my veranda. That just shows how out of touch National Party members and Ministers are. The decision to halt Queensland's biggest irrigation farm development will have a substantial impact on the State Budget. An article in the *Townsville Bulletin* under the heading "Cane mill wrangle halts irrigation plan" states—

> "The decision to halt Queensland's biggest irrigation farm development will have a substantial impact on the State Budget."

Further on it states—

> "The development slowdown will also have an adverse effect on the Burdekin economy. The State Government has spent about $20 million a year developing the scheme, and dozens of people are employed developing channels, roads and farms.
>
> Mr Hobbs said that money would now be spent elsewhere."

I have received a letter from the Queensland Conservation Council and the Etheridge Landcare Committee, which states—

> "We believe that rubber vine is becoming one of the most profound rural environmental problems that Queensland is facing. While both State and Federal governments have acknowledged that rubber vine is a serious problem, there has been little concerted effort in tackling the situation."

Further, I have received another letter from a person concerned about the community rainforest replacement program.

Mr Woolmer interjected.

Mr PALASZCZUK: That is something that the honourable member for Springwood has not even heard of. He would not even know how to spell the term.

The letter states—

> "At the inception of this scheme we were given an undertaking that this scheme would continue for three years. And because of our strong belief in this scheme, we have forgone the sale of our property and have taken out a loan to buy a new tractor and slasher.
>
> We were forced to destock our property of many of our cattle, to provide land for tree planting, therefore, forgoing an ongoing cashflow.
>
> . . .
>
> This scheme also means a great deal to the community as a whole, e.g. As an immediate benefit to the economy of the region, we have personally employed local contractors such as fencers, bulldozer operators, a farm hand, the local sawmiller, and brought produce such as mulching hay and tree guards from local agencies."

That scheme has been scrapped—it has gone—and these people are left with nothing at all.

Mr Stoneman: I can't understand a word he is saying.

Mr PALASZCZUK: Perhaps the honourable member will understand what I am about to say. There was an expectation in rural Queensland that, once the Nationals and Liberals were in power, things would improve for rural Queensland. The bush voted with one voice for a return of the Liberal/National Federal Government. This turnaround gave the Howard Government the type of supremacy in rural and regional Queensland unheard of since the Fraser years. "Howard's Liberal Government" are the operative words. John Howard does not need the Nationals; he can rule in his own right. Hence the bleeding that is being felt in rural and provincial Queensland. In many small local communities the impact of job cuts has a disproportionate affect on the local economy. What does all this do? As rural Queensland cries out for help, the rest of Australia wrongly thinks that the farmers are after handouts again. Rural people do not want a future which increasingly has a social welfare orientation. All they want is a fair go, and the resources to be better equipped and revitalised so that they can generate more wealth for Australia.

Here are some positives that I believe the National/Liberal Party Government can look at. Firstly, let us look at how we can reduce cost burdens for rural businesses and farm families. How can we improve and enhance rural community life? How can we improve the image and public perception of rural communities? How about some new methods of improving rural business in rural communities? How can we keep Government agencies in rural Queensland?

In conclusion, it is my belief that the $65m cutback to ABC funding will have a huge effect on rural Queensland. I do not believe that rural Queensland will just lie down and take these cutbacks to the services. Where would the ABC be without Macca? Where would rural Queensland be without Macca? Where would rural Queensland be without its specialised rural news and information services? Where would the ABC be without its talkback programs? How well informed would rural Queensland be when important events occurring in different Parliaments will not be heard about after rural ABC news services are cut? A fundamental right of all citizens of our country, including Queensland, is the right to be able to listen to the news about what

occurs in Parliament. If people cannot attend the public gallery to listen in, they have a right to listen to it on the radio and to read about it in the newspapers. These funding cuts are going to deny those rights to the rural people in Queensland. Therefore, I urge all honourable members to support this motion and to send the message to Canberra that rural Queensland is bleeding and bleeding badly. It needs local members, such as the honourable member for Lockyer, to stand up for rural Queensland. The more I travel around western Queensland, the more I hear rural Queensland saying——

Time expired.

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton) (6.10 p.m.): I rise to second the motion. In so doing, I want to place on record my disgust at the extent of service removal from regional and rural Queensland. In particular, I want to talk about my own electorate, in which about 38 per cent of people are employed in the public sector. Every time a service goes from Rockhampton, so do a number of jobs. Currently the pundits have it that we can expect to lose about 400 to 500 jobs as a result of Federal Government and State Government cutbacks.

Before the merger debacle that Mrs Sheldon embarked on, Suncorp had already abolished 14 jobs. We have already seen the electricity industry being centralised in terms of billing. That will get rid of about 45 jobs from Capelec in Rockhampton. We have already seen the regional health authority scrapped, which meant that 43 people lost their jobs. In the Federal sphere—and I think this is particularly disgraceful—we have seen the Office of Regional Development closed with a week's notice. No longer will it undertake the important role of supporting projects in the region to make us competitive in the Pacific Rim and allowing us to develop markets in that area. That will result in even further job losses.

The Tax Office is an embarrassing debacle if ever there was one. The Federal member came back from Canberra pronouncing that all would be well, that the issue of the Tax Office had been solved——

Mr Bredhauer: The same thing in Cairns.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The same thing in Cairns. Of course, that was proved to be a heap of rot. The Tax Office will close at the end of this month, meaning that people in Rockhampton and in the general central Queensland region will not have access to that support; they will have to telephone Townsville, wait on the end of the line and take their chance with the advice that they receive.

The Family Court is also under threat, which will mean even further delays in the hearing of those matters. So local people will be without that service as well. This Government has cut the conferencing budget by about 50 per cent. This will mean that the opportunities to hold face-to-face conferences to resolve conflicts will be lessened, especially in the areas of Blackwater, Emerald and Gladstone. The CES is looking at considerable cuts in staff numbers.

The Austudy/Abstudy office has been told that it is to close next year and that the lease has not been renewed. Again, 30-odd jobs will go because of that. There is talk that the office will be turned into a post office. That will be a great help to the Central Queensland University, which pumps about $110m into the local economy! We have seen the disgraceful attack on the university itself. The cuts that are being bandied about are anywhere between 8 per cent and 12 per cent. That will have a huge effect on Rockhampton and the environs, and it will mean the closure of campuses in places such as Emerald, Mackay and Gladstone.

Mr Johnson: You're scaremongering.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I take the interjection. In the area of rail, we are seeing more centralisation of jobs. The HRM section is to be moved to Brisbane. There is also an indication that the traffic controllers will move from Rockhampton to Townsville and to Brisbane.

This Government has no mechanism to deal with these issues. At a local level I tried to put together an all-party committee between Mr Lester, Mr Marek—the Federal member—Mr Pearce and myself. The only two starters were Mr Pearce and me. The so-called Independent mayor decided to set up his own committee. I believe they have had one meeting, and since then about 60 jobs have gone. When we return to Government, we will have a mechanism for dealing with these sorts of issues. The Cabinet ruler will have to be run over the bureaucracy. If it wants to take services out of rural and provincial Queensland, it will have to put something back. The bureaucracy always thinks centrally, and that is one of the difficulties that any Government faces. We have to overcome that thinking. I believe that the mechanism that we had in Government in the Office of Rural Communities worked very well, in that a rural impact statement had to be provided to Cabinet before services could be removed

from rural Queensland. We will expand that on returning to Government, which in my view will happen sooner rather than later.

Time expired.

Mr MITCHELL (Charters Towers) (6.15 p.m.): This has nearly gone beyond a joke, as evidenced by the contribution of the previous speaker. Once again we see the hypocrisy of this Opposition in moving a motion such as this and having the gall to try to censure the current Government. It was the six years of the Goss Labor Government which tore the heart and soul out of the bush. If members opposite do not believe me, they should consider the turnaround in the State vote in July last year and the result in Mundingburra early this year. The Labor Party forgot the troops. It forgot all about the rural areas and the primary producers of this State. Even its leader, Mr Beattie, has gone on record admitting—and the previous speaker did this also—that the Labor Party let down its followers, particularly those in rural areas.

What rural areas had to suffer over six years was almost criminal. The cutbacks practically decimated many country towns. It is now up to our coalition Government to repair the damage and give back to the people of these towns and businesses and industry the services that were taken away. But we cannot do it overnight. It will take us a little bit longer than that, but we will do it. We will repair the damage done by the previous Labor Government.

It was only this week that the Primary Industries Minister, Mr Trevor Perrett, moved quickly to continue his commitment to put the DPI back in the bush. He announced new positions throughout Queensland—40 of them—which are only the first of many as the Government carries out its determination to meet this promise. In six years Labor retrenched 692 DPI research and extension staff, creating bleak job prospects for rural science and agriculture graduates from our universities and agricultural colleges. The DPI is once again employing people to meet the needs of primary producers where they live, not from some distant tower that is out of touch with what is going on—not from the bureaucracy in Brisbane. The previous speaker touched on that point.

Everybody realised just how devastating some of the Labor cutbacks could be when the papaya fruit fly disaster occurred, largely due to depleted checkpoints. At one stage, the positions of 30 to 40 stock inspectors were abolished throughout the State, and there was the prospect of no increase in the DPI budget over at least three years. In north Queensland, the horticultural branch was hit by problems at Cairns, Townsville, Mareeba, Innisfail—one could go right across the whole north of Queensland. Very sad was the closing of several small DPI offices—Jondaryan, Wandoan and Inglewood, just to name a few. I could throw a few of my own in there, too. At one stage, there were major staff cuts of 53 scientific officers, 44 inspectors, 36 clerks/administration officers and 31 advisers/experimentalists. This brought new fears of tick spread—a situation which has not improved over the last six years. By far the greatest damage to rural areas was the state in which the Labor Government left the economy—a gaping hole of nearly $200m. The former Government embarked on a so-called efficiency drive which tore the very heart out of the bush.

Let us look at police alone. Labor promised to build up police strength. Instead, what did we see: staff cutbacks in Townsville, Rockhampton, Bowen, Biloela——

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr MITCHELL: Every one of them. We saw cutbacks also in Proserpine, Clermont and Hughenden. Does the member want me to name a few more? Moranbah and the Sunshine Coast were two more regions affected. There was hardly a rural area that was not hit. In many areas, the State police presence, particularly at weekends, was drastically curtailed. Instead of the 1,200 new police promised by the former Government in its first term, only 400 were in place by February 1991.

What about fire services? Of the $106m allocated in the 1990-91 budget, a paltry $2.2m went to rural fire services. What about rail services?

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr MITCHELL: The member for Rockhampton should know this as well as anybody. There were cutbacks everywhere. Highway construction slipped.

Mr Johnson: Six thousand.

Mr MITCHELL: Six thousand railway workers were put off during the six years of the Labor Government. Highway construction slipped. Councils were forced to lay off road gangs, and that was still going on right up until July last year. Education suffered badly with jobs lost and spending cutbacks. Nowhere was worse hit than Health. Under a series of Health Ministers, four in about six years——

Time expired.

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay) (6.20 p.m.): In speaking in support of the motion, I am deeply saddened that I am able to stand in this House and criticise the selected withdrawal of services to rural and regional areas of Queensland by State and Federal conservative Governments. Conservative Governments at both State and Federal levels are big on the rhetoric of law and order. Let us look at the track record of their effort in the Mackay region.

Firstly, the State coalition Government has failed the people of the Mackay region and, indeed, all Queenslanders, for its sins are repeated across all of the State. In Mackay, at the last election, the coalition promised to build a new police station on the northern side of the city. I have now been advised by the Minister for Police that this facility has no priority with this deceitful Government. That it has failed to honour this promise indicates the basic dishonesty of this party, which so stridently proclaimed itself as the champion of law and order. This Police Minister, who should be setting an example to his police officers, will have the colossal hide to stand up in front of the new regional headquarters built by the Labor Government to provide more efficient law and order programs and preach to the law-abiding citizens of Mackay whilst demonstrating the basic dishonesty of his party by refusing to honour the promise trumpeted at election time.

It follows that there will be no further increases in police numbers. This contention is supported by the Minister's announcement that he has cancelled the July intake of cadets and has further curtailed the next two intakes after that. That this is a basic tenet of the coalition's philosophy is demonstrated and proven by the determination of its colleagues in the Howard/Fischer Federal Government to withdraw the Federal Police presence from Mackay.

Remembering all of this, and remembering that the Mackay region has three ports which are visited by boats from all over the world, bringing with them the problems associated with the international drug trade and other associated crimes, it is a further demonstration of the coalition's insincerity and dishonesty of purpose when we find that the number of customs officers Australiawide is to be cut by 440. Mackay ports will be expected to bear their share of this savage cutback. I ask the House to remember that Mackay was the scene of a $20m cocaine bust. It is reasonable to expect that the cocaine trade is not run by law-abiding citizens.

Slashing of services to regional Australia means that the Family Court will have to find $3.5m in cuts, which will mean the closure of the sub-registry office and counselling service in Mackay, which opened only on April Fools' Day. It is Australian families that will bear the brunt of these foolish cuts.

It is interesting that the implication of cuts to rural and regional services has escaped coalition Governments and, in particular, our Queensland minority coalition Government in whose ranks it would appear to be heresy to provide employment-generating initiatives.

Mr Nunn: They wouldn't know what a job was.

Mr MULHERIN: That is right.

Consider the distribution of health care, and again honourable members will find that the sins of omission are not peculiar to the Mackay region, but what is happening in Mackay is indicative of what is happening right across the State—except perhaps in a few of the favoured seats held by the coalition. The last addition to the facilities for the upgrading of the provision of health care in Mackay was the building of the $6.5m Community Health Centre and breast-screening clinic established by the Labor Government but unashamedly opened by the Minister for Health, who does not mind basking in the reflected glory of Labor achievements.

Labor also, through good planning by the regional health authority, set in train and committed funding for the $25m Mackay Base Hospital refurbishment. To the Minister's credit, he has shrunk from bare-facedly claiming that project as his own. To his discredit he does not give any recognition to the dedicated and professional health administrators from the regional health authority whose jobs and careers were sacrificed on the altar of this Minister's incredible ego. The Mackay Regional Health Authority was a respected institution in the City of Mackay and served the region well. Since its demise, the Government and the Minister for Health have been completely devoid of any constructive ideas which would improve the distribution of health care in Mackay. Job losses and policy piracy have been their only claim to fame. Again, to complement the Queensland coalition neglect of regional and rural Queensland, we find that its Federal colleagues are only too willing to kick in with the threat to close Medicare offices Australiawide.

Finally, it must be remembered that the Treasurer of Queensland, who is charged with the running of the economy of this State, was the perpetrator of a deed the repercussions of

which have been felt in every facet of life in rural and country Queensland. The Treasurer, without reference to her Cabinet or the Minister for Transport, went on a mad cow rampage when she increased Queensland's debt by $200m by abolishing the Sunshine Motorway toll. The ripple effect of her greedy grab has infiltrated the budgets of every department from Transport and Health through Education and Police to Primary Industries and Families and any other department that one cares to name. The result has been a shortfall in funding—so necessary to the distribution of essential services.

Time expired.

Mr MALONE (Mirani) (6.25 p.m.): What a joke that the Labor Opposition has brought on this motion after the absolute massacre of rural services over the six years of its Government. I would have thought that it is a bit like shooting oneself in the foot. From July 1990, hospitals have been experiencing extreme budget difficulties with ward closures, the postponement of elective surgical services and the sacking of casual workers. Public hospitals had to struggle to cope with a $52m shortfall in the State Health budget. There have been life-threatening shortages of specialists in country hospitals, with more than 20 hospitals in country areas unable to fill positions for specialists. I know of many occasions when people had to wait for attention at the Mackay Base Hospital or be transferred to other areas simply because the relevant specialist was not available.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation on both sides of the Chamber. The House will come to order.

Mr MALONE: A fairly clear example of Labor's commitment to the bush was when it cut $256,000 from the Royal Flying Doctor Service grant. Symptomatic of the Labor administration was the trend in country hospitals to gain more administrative staff and cut down on nurses and hands-on experts in those hospitals. As members would recollect, hospitals also had to cope with unfunded wage rises. For example, the Townsville Hospital suffered a $700,000 shortfall, and the Maryborough Hospital experienced a $300,000 shortfall. A restriction was placed on the buying of consumables in hospitals in the Mackay region simply because they were trying to fund unfunded wage rises. As a result, the purchase of consumables such as soap and toilet paper had to be restricted for a period.

Right throughout Queensland postal services were downgraded and courthouses closed. Those establishments have always represented a special avenue for career paths for young people in country areas. When one really thinks about it, one realises that that is where Labor lost the human touch. It forgot about the people in rural communities. The Goss Government spent more than $180m in long service and recreation leave, leave loading, redundancy and early retirement payments from 1 July 1990 to June 1993. In the justice sector, no fewer than 26 courthouses were closed throughout Queensland.

I turn now to the rail service in my electorate. There were particularly severe cutbacks in rail, with almost 6,000 men being taken off the service. Those men were particularly important in country areas. According to Queensland Rail's annual report, $73.1m was paid to redundant workers in 1991-92. Overall the Goss Government spent a total of $153m over its first three Budgets making railway workers redundant. For example, in Townsville, 450 employees were made redundant following a decision to close the workshop there. There was almost one derailment a day in my electorate. When I came into this House, I had an ongoing argument with the then member for Mackay, Mr Ed Casey. Although it was said in a jovial fashion, it was a rather serious matter. Mr Casey blamed the derailments on the obsolete rolling stock that was carting cane between Carmila and the Sarina mill. However, most of the derailments occurred outside that area. It was always a joke around the place that the cane must have been going through to Ingham or somewhere else. At that time there was a massive accident on the coal line. It cost about $100m to rectify that.

In relation to transport—increased charges have been brought about by a $175m tax slug on diesel excise by the Federal Government and a $100m slug through sales tax by the State Government. The Goss Government cut rail services right throughout the State. It then wondered why those services were not making a profit, so it closed down the lines. There was an increase in registration fees for heavy farm vehicles. This impacted on the viability of farms. Road construction jobs had to go to tender, causing councils to compete with private enterprise.

Time expired.

Mr LIVINGSTONE (Ipswich West) (6.30 p.m.): I rise in support of the motion moved by the member for Inala. When the

Liberal/National Parties became the minority Government in Queensland, they inherited a very healthy economy. It is with considerable regret that we see those people running around this State dishonestly saying what a terrible economy they inherited. It was so bad that Joan Sheldon could get $200m out of the Budget in the first week in order to remove the toll from the Sunshine Motorway! It was no problem at all for her to do that. The Treasurer found $80m in order to play the stock market, so she should not come into this Chamber and talk to Opposition members about the poor state of the economy.

Let us not forget the members' opposite other little mate, Johnny Howard. He runs all over the country talking about the $8 billion black hole.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr LIVINGSTONE: The honourable member should sit and be quiet. He is living proof that one does not need pink and white feathers to be a galah.

When little Johnny Howard runs around talking to the ordinary people in the street, he talks about the $8 billion hole. However, recently he spoke at the International Monetary Fund Conference in Sydney. When one is speaking at a conference at that level, one is talking to people who know the economy. Those people can read accounts the way that taxi drivers can read signs. At that conference, the Prime Minister stated that the coalition had inherited a "strong and growing economy". He went on to say—

> "We have now had 19 quarters of very strong growth."

The Prime Minister continued—

> "I intend to build on the strengths we have inherited."

How many honourable members can remember little Johnny Howard saying at the last election that no Australian worker would be worse off? Honourable members should speak to the CES workers in Ipswich. Currently, that office employs 55 staff, but on 19 August 22 of them will be gone. They have accepted a voluntary redundancy because they do not see any future in staying with the CES office. The Skillshare office has suffered funding cuts of one third. Skillshare has been told that some branches will have to amalgamate or close down as a result of further cuts. What a great record the Federal Government has!

The actions of the members opposite should be viewed in the light of what the area of Ipswich had under the Goss Government. One of the great strengths of the Goss Government was the Urban Renewal Program in the Leichhardt/Wulkuraka region. That program was kicked off under Terry Mackenroth as Minister. It was a five-year plan which started in February 1994. In that area we have a Police Beat, a new shopping centre and traffic calming. Parks have been upgraded by the local authority. The school is to be repainted and a swimming pool is planned. Tenders have been called for the swimming pool, but guess what: currently, there is no money, so that pool is under threat just like everything else.

Mr Mitchell interjected.

Mr LIVINGSTONE: If the honourable member listens he might learn something.

As to the Leichhardt Urban Renewal Program—that area was built approximately 30 years ago by the Queensland Housing Commission at a time when there was an immediate need for an increase in low-cost family housing. Many of those demands have now changed because people view their housing considerably differently from the way they did then. Unfortunately, as soon as this minority Government came to office, it froze that project. It is all very well to say that they have not. Honourable members opposite can say that perhaps the development will go ahead. Perhaps it will, but what about all the uncertainty that has been created? I wrote to Di McCauley in relation to this issue. I will not read her entire reply, but I will read the part that counts. The letter states—

> "While I can appreciate the urban renewal work undertaken to date in the Leichhardt area has been of benefit to your constituents, it is not possible to pre-empt the findings of the current Budget review or to guarantee continuation of any funding commitments made by the previous Government."

What a disgrace! That project is halfway through. People have bought houses off the plan on the understanding that that project would be completed. I received a response from Ray Connor. His letter stated——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Please refer to the member as the Honourable Minister.

Mr LIVINGSTONE: In his reply, the Honourable Minister, Mr Connor, stated—

> ". . . I cannot see why Urban Renewal activities should not continue while the community is supportive of such projects."

I agree. Today I tabled a petition containing 453 signatures of people who live in that area who want the project to go ahead. However,

the disgraceful mob opposite have had that project frozen.

Time expired.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (6.35 p.m.): What a mob of hypocrites we have opposite. Let us revisit some of the statements made by some of the members opposite after 20 July. An article stated—

> "Len Ardill, an MP since 1986 and former Brisbane City councillor, said it was clear two years ago that the Government had run off the rails.
>
> He said that the Goss Government's second term had been dominated by economic rationalists intent on paying off debt instead of delivering services."

Those are the very issues that the Opposition is referring to in this motion. What about Tom Burns, the former member for Lytton? On the next day, 21 July, an article stated—

> "Mr Burns said the Government spent too much time being 'economic rationalists' and forgot about people."

Do Opposition members remember Tom Burns, or have they forgotten him already? A former branch member of the ALP wrote in to a newspaper stating that the Labor rats were exposed. He stated—

> "The real 'rats' are those who abandoned social justice for economic rationalism, who replaced quality community services with public sector managerialism, and who valued the opinion of the pin-striped, mobile-phone brigade over both the ordinary ALP branch member and the average concerned citizens.
>
> The real 'rats' continued to substitute factional mediocrity for merit.
>
> Looking for the real 'rats'? Try the cabinet room."

What hypocrisy for the members opposite to move this motion! They are the same people who closed down the workshops in Townsville, wiped out the Forward Movement of Stock Program for droughted stock, closed railway lines and closed country courthouses. The police were decimated everywhere. The member for Thuringowa knows that the DPI extension officers for stock inspection were withdrawn, as the member for Charters Towers mentioned. The fisheries inspectors could not even get fuel for their vehicles much less their boats. They had no fuel in their boats.

Mr Perrett: No boats.

Mr STONEMAN: No boats.

Do honourable members remember when Ed Casey said that Labor would wipe out the ticks? That was the greatest joke of all time. He did nothing about it. What about schools? Prior to the last election people in the Burdekin, Bowen and other areas were told by the members opposite, "We will give you schools. We will upgrade facilities." They did not even have the money. What about the ambulances? The former Government took one of the ambulance vehicles in my electorate—which had been provided with money raised by members of the community running around rattling tins and selling tickets in chook raffles—and sent it to Magnetic Island. A four-wheel-drive vehicle was taken from Home Hill and sent down to Bowen. Wherever one went, one found that the ambulance stations where members of the community had worked and where people had been able to go to pay their subscriptions had disappeared in droves. The members opposite do not have a clue about providing real services for country areas. They have wiped out the morale of the people in country towns.

When one used to travel along the railway line to Mount Isa, the first place one came to was Woodstock. There were good families there who worked in the railways. They have disappeared. The houses have been pulled up and only the mango trees remain. The next stop is Reid River. What does one see there? Nothing but two or three dilapidated mango trees! There are no workers there. As a result, the school bus service is battling. That is the case all along the line—Bentley, Torrens Creek and out through the west. Most of the members opposite would never have been to those places.

Let us consider the mob that led the debate on this motion. The member for Inala is a lovely person, but he would not have a clue because he has never been out there. The member for Rockhampton lives in the middle of town. The member for Mackay does not have a lump of sugar in his electorate. So the list goes on, including the member for Ipswich West. The members opposite have the great audacity to move this motion, which highlights their mediocrity. I cannot believe that, under any circumstances, I will ever hear a speech worse than that which I heard tonight from the member for Yeronga. What an amazing speech! We have heard it from all over the place tonight. It is quite amazing.

The Government has been stuck with the mess left by the former Government. We have to find the money that the members opposite wasted. They are wastrels of the worst kind. The money is gone and this Government has

to try to return morale to the community and get it back on its feet. What about the drought? The members opposite did not do a single thing for communities throughout this State suffering as a result of droughts. Thank God the Minister had the determination and the knowledge to turn it around and reinstitute the Forward Movement of Stock Program. In the 13 years that I have been a member, I have not heard such rot.

Time expired.

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa) (6.40 p.m.): It saddens me to have to join in this debate. It saddens me even further that this Parliament should have to debate this motion at a time when the people who live in regional and remote areas of this State are being bashed by both the State and Federal Governments and at a time when those people in regional and remote areas require help.

Although I detested many of the policies of the old Country Party, at least it claimed to represent the interests of the people who lived in the country and regional centres of this State. However, in 1974, when the Country Party conference was held at Mount Isa, a decision was made to change the party's name from the Country Party to the National Party. That is when the rot really set in. I remember that conference well because I attended it. The Country Party moved away from its country and regional base because it wanted to be all things to all men and to all women.

A Government member: Who wrote this?

Mr McGRADY: I wrote it myself. Today, I have listened to the nonsense that has come from the Government benches. There has not been one single initiative, not one single suggestion, as to what we should do to try to improve the lot of those people who live in the regional parts of this State.

There is no more blatant abuse of country Queensland than the decision by the coalition Federal Government to slash funding for the ABC. The ABC is a national broadcaster. It plays a vital role in the life of country and regional Queenslanders. Although commercial radio and television plays an important role and does a magnificent job, it is the ABC upon which so many country people depend. Yet this coalition Government, consisting of many National Party members, is the Government that is slashing the funding to the ABC. It is a shame, it is an insult, it is an outrage and it must be stopped.

What have the members of the National Party done? Not one single thing. Closer to home, from page 1 of the Commission of Audit right through its various volumes, that report is an attack on rural and regional Queensland. The Government talks about privatising the electricity industry. Of course, last night we put a stop to the Government's gallop. However, the Government is talking about the user-pays principle, it is talking about the privatisation of the ports and it is talking about a number of issues which, when they are added up, amount to a basic attack on rural and regional Queensland.

The Federal Government is closing down taxation offices in Cairns and immigration offices in Townsville. It is talking about reducing the number of Medicare offices in the regional centres as well as talking about reducing staff at the CES and Social Security. The Federal Government is talking about cutting funding to Skillshare programs. At the same time, the State Government has set up Premier's offices in all of those regional cities. What have we heard from the new Premier's offices? Not one single word. I ask: where is all this going to stop?

The other question I want to ask the National Party members in this Chamber is: what have they done to stop this blatant attack on the people they purport to represent? They blindly go along with the dictates of Mrs Sheldon and her Liberals. I know that they have done nothing at all in this Chamber, and I do not believe that they have done anything at all in the party room. The National Party in this State has betrayed the people it purports to represent. Members of the Government do not mind going out into regional areas dressed up in their Country Road shirts and jeans and wearing their Akubra hats and visiting the mining centres. They do not mind ripping off mining royalties and taking other profits out of the mining industry. What do they give back? Not a single, solitary thing! The Government has embarked on a campaign of reducing the services to those mining communities. Government members ought to be ashamed of themselves. They have betrayed the people who elected them.

Let me say to Government members: the people are waking up to them. The National Party members no longer represent country people. They have abdicated their policies. They are following the dictates of the Gina Jeffries——

Time expired.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick) (6.45 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to refute all of this nonsense that is floating around from the Opposition. The greatest pity is that I do not have half an hour to outline all the positive things that this Government has done in the five months since it assumed office.

I will try to precis some of the Government's initiatives so that, hopefully, I can inform some of those very ill-informed members opposite. Firstly, I will inform the honourable shadow Minister for Natural Resources of the initiatives of this Government as they relate to the Department of Natural Resources. Already, the formation of the new Department of Natural Resources has brought a great deal of benefit to people. There has been the formation of a nine-member independent water infrastructure task force, which has been commissioned to prioritise and identify $1 billion worth of major water projects over 15 years. I am sure that that is something that the honourable member for Inala opposes. The preferred site for a $130m dam on the Comet River has been announced. That is a really positive initiative for central Queensland. Legislation relating to rural issues has been passed, there have been amendments to the Land Act to freeze Crown land rentals in the grazing and agricultural categories at last year's levels and there has been an amendment to the Land Title Act to offer duplicate certificates of titles, which has been very well received. There have also been amendments to resurrect the Land Court and the Land Appeal Court. In response to outcries from rural and regional areas, a complete reassessment of the State's valuation system has been undertaken in order to seek a process that is more open, accountable and understandable. That is something that has been called for for many years.

The Rural Lands Protection Act has been revamped to ensure assistance to land-holders to protect them from and to combat feral animals and noxious weeds. The Government has sought action in the High Court to change the native title legislation to protect pastoral leases—something about which many people in rural areas are concerned. There has also been the postponement of any endorsement of the regional Cape York agreement.

The Government has provided $100,000 to establish a peak body representing all Queensland's rural women in their dealings with Government. The list goes on. There has been the establishment of 39 district health councils and the dismantling of Labor's failed regionalisation system. The facilities at numerous rural and remote hospitals have been upgraded, including hospitals at Alpha, Aramac, Blackall, Isisford back to the bush and has placed emphasis on primary producers. It has attained national support to the tune of $6.076m in the campaign to eradicate the papaya fruit fly.

The Eldorado gold mine's No. 2 production shaft at Gympie has been opened. An inquiry has been announced into trading hours—something that people in rural areas have been calling out for for a long time because extended trading hours have had a very, very adverse effect on rural businesses. The Government has established a wide-ranging public inquiry into workers' compensation and the impact that the workers' compensation policy had on rural areas.

The Government has provided funding of $227,500 to the Queensland Farmers Federation to continue the development of a network of rural health and safety coordinators throughout Queensland. Queensland Rail has announced that it will be transporting all donated fodder free of freight charges to drought-stricken areas. The Government has opened a Government Agent's Office—QGAP—in Croydon, which is located in the electorate of the honourable member for Cook. Queensland's bid for the 2006 Commonwealth Games has been announced. The list goes on.

It is quite clear that members opposite have done nothing else but run around the State in a negative, knocking, carping manner. Not for one moment have they cared to look at the truth.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I do not have time for that.

Time expired.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (6.50 p.m.): I give some credit to the previous speaker in this debate, the honourable member for Warwick. At least he has attempted to talk about some of the things that have happened over the last five months. Unfortunately, no other Government speaker has talked about the dreadful things that the Government has done in rural and regional parts of Queensland over the last five months. However, the member for Warwick rattled off a long list of things which were all initiatives of the Labor Government. They were all projects that the Labor Government put into place and that the

coalition froze in March and then brought on-stream in April, May, June and July and announced as its initiatives. The Government is behaving fraudulently towards the people of Queensland because all of those projects were Labor Party initiatives.

Mr Hamill: They have one good initiative: they are going to take 10 jobs out of Warwick when they close down Suncorp.

Mr BREDHAUER: They are going to take 10 jobs out of Warwick when they close down Suncorp; we all know that. This Government does not care about services in regional and remote parts of Queensland because its members do not represent regional and remote parts of Queensland. Where does their leadership come from? From the Gold Coast, Beaudesert and Caloundra.

The first slap in the face the Government gave to people in regional and remote Queensland was the composition of its Cabinet. Where are its Cabinet Ministers from Rockhampton or Mackay or Townsville or Cairns or in the north west? It does not have any. It does not have a Cabinet Minister from between the Burnett and the Atherton Tableland and there is only one, the member for Gregory, west of the Great Dividing Range. All other Government members sit down in the south-east corner.

Mrs McCauley: What about me?

Mr BREDHAUER: I overlooked the Minister for Local Government and Planning and I apologise for that. It is known that the Government does not care about the people in regional and remote Queensland. All it does is toss around a few Premier's offices and a few Parliamentary Secretary positions, but we know that decisions are made in the Cabinet. Because regional and rural parts of Queensland do not have a voice in the Cabinet, they are being ignored and their services are being slashed or taken away.

The Government has slashed funding to regional health authorities. The regional centre has been taken away from Cairns and everything has to be done through Townsville or Brisbane. Jobs were taken out of Cairns at the same time. What about the Cairns community renewal program? The Labor Government promised $20m to that program and the Government has slashed it. The Government has done away with the whole program that we were going to implement to ease the problems associated with juvenile justice, which we have been debating today. The suburbs that would have benefited from urban renewal will now be totally neglected.

What about the Department of Environment? A month after coming to Government, the coalition took away five vehicles in far-north Queensland. There is now only one four-wheel drive vehicle to service an area that stretches from Cairns to Cape Melville. The other day, one poor officer from Mossman had to go to a meeting in Cooktown and, because he did not have a vehicle, he had to go on his own motorbike. He came a cropper on a dirt road and injured himself because the Government took vehicles away.

In my electorate, the Queensland Ambulance Service has been told that it can buy bandages and fuel for ambulances, but it cannot buy anything else until the Budget comes down in September because the Government has taken all the money away. And what about Skillshare, which the Government's Federal colleagues in Canberra have cut? What about the cuts to the alternative dispute resolution procedures that are hitting regional centres? What about the Regional Arts Development Fund? The Government has slashed $5m—one-third of its funding—from the Regional Arts Development Fund and it has delayed acting on all the submissions. What about the Cairns tax office? What about the ABC? Next year the Government is going to take $55m from the ABC, which will mean taking services out of the homes of people who live in regional and rural parts of Queensland. Government members have all sat there dumb struck. What about the people in Canberra who are ripping services out of Government members' electorates and my electorate, while Government members have said nothing? They have made no contribution at all.

Senator Ian MacDonald perpetrated a confidence trick on the people of regional Australia when he said that regional development programs would be embarked upon. That was before the election. We know what happened to him and his programs after the election; all those programs have been abolished.

We have not yet come to the new agenda—the Vince FitzGerald agenda—which the Government has. That agenda will privatise the electricity industry and the port authorities, which will take jobs away from people in regional Queensland. That agenda will privatise the TAB, which will take money out of the pockets of country racing clubs. What about the road building program? How will local governments get on when the Government implements the privatisation of the road building program?

The Government is an absolute disgrace. It is a south-east Queensland based Government—Gold Coast, Beaudesert, Sunshine Coast. Government members do not give a hoot for the people in regional and remote parts of Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Time expired.

Mr BREDHAUER: They have sat dumb struck for the whole time these services have been ripped off.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind the member for Cook that in future when I call "Order" he will sit down and will not continue.

Time expired.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 40—Barton, Beattie, Bird, Bligh, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Campbell, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Foley, Fouras, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, McElligott, McGrady, Mackenroth, Milliner, Mulherin, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Purcell, Roberts, Robertson, Rose, Schwarten, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Welford, Wells, Woodgate *Tellers:* Livingstone, Sullivan T. B.

NOES, 41—Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Cunningham, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Harper, Healy, Hegarty, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Laming, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Malone, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Radke, Rowell, Santoro, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Tanti, Warwick, Watson, Wilson, Woolmer *Tellers:* Springborg, Carroll

Pairs: Ardill, Veivers; Gibbs, Baumann; Smith, Davidson

Resolved in the **negative**.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer—Leader of Government Business) (7.02 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Home Day Care Program

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (7.02 p.m.): I wish to draw the attention of honourable members of this House to the threat posed by the Howard Federal Government, supported by the Borbidge State Government, to the Home Day Care program that was established and funded by the Keating Labor Government.

This Australian model of Family Day Care is world renowned and does everything a parent could ever want a child-care service to do, and then some. Grounded in the foundation of the family as a spirit or ethos for the model of practice, Family Day Care offers the best of both worlds—a place where children can grow up at home and within a family environment whilst their parents are actively and productively participating in the community. Sadly, this service could soon be a thing of the past if the Howard razor gang slashes its funding in the forthcoming Budget.

Across Australia, Family Day Care is made up of 100,000 children and their parents, 20,000 carers, and 2,000 coordinating unit staff. In Queensland, 7,600 children and their parents, 1,400 carers, and 150 staff benefit from this world-renowned service. There are 90 carers in Maryborough and Hervey Bay, and more than 400 children aged from zero to 12 years and their parents would be affected if Howard's razor gang slashes into Family Day Care funding. The economic consequence in our region would be staggering, as Maryborough and Hervey Bay currently contribute some $1.5m annually to our local economy by way of payments to carers for the costs of care and the coordination units' salaries.

I wish to read a letter addressed to me from a carer in my region. It states—

> "I currently operate a small business. I am a care provider within the Maryborough and Districts Family Day Care Scheme and I offer a quality family based child care service to parents who work in this area.
>
> I have chosen to operate under the 'umbrella' of Family Day Care for a number of reasons some of which are: parents using my service can be assured that their child's wellbeing is being monitored. I can access services such as toy and equipment loans, library resources and specific training, and I can access physical and emotional support through the many networking opportunities made available to me.
>
> Changes to Operational Funding and Childcare Assistance have the potential to put me out of business! Obviously I view this situation with grave concern because if I go out of business, what will happen to the children I am currently caring for? Will I be paid unemployment benefits? What about those of us who won't be eligible for unemployment benefits? How will that effect our local economy? These are questions I implore you to ask the Minister for Family Services urgently.
>
> Until now our scheme has been forward planning to implement such procedures as Quality Assurance, Competency based Training and National

> Standards—will all our efforts be for nothing? The Australian Family Day Care model is world renowned for it's ability to deliver quality child care based on family life. As part of that model I am nurturing our country's future and preserving family life—something that no other service can offer.
>
> Please ensure that Family Day Care in Australia remains the envy of the world. Our funding should not be decreased—it should be increased to reflect the important role we play to so many Australian families."

This Government has been too preoccupied with its reviews into everything and its multimillion-dollar stock market splurge with taxpayers' money and, to top it all off, a $1m Commission of Audit which recommended that the Government privatise everything bar the kitchen sink. The people who are being disadvantaged and hurt most of all by these savage cuts and inaction by the Government are the people who live in rural and regional areas of Queensland—places such as Maryborough. It is time this Government stood up to Prime Minister Howard and to all that lot in Canberra.

All areas within children's services programs are being considered for cuts and policy changes. Nothing is sacred to these slash-and-burn Federal and State coalition Governments. Family Day Care is but one of the programs that will be affected that cares for our working parents' children—parents who battle and work hard to put a roof over their family's heads by either paying off a house or paying rent, and to educate their children. This coalition Government seems unprepared to do battle with its Federal counterparts to maintain a standard of child care that the previous Federal and State Labor Governments put in place. I get the distinct feeling that these Federal and State Governments are about removing working mothers from the work force by removing child-minding facilities or by making them so expensive that they will not be able to be afforded by the average working family.

Time expired.

Displaced and Homeless Persons, Cairns

Mrs WILSON (Mulgrave) (7.07 p.m.): I wish to advise honourable members on progress made recently in helping to overcome the problem of public drunkenness and alcohol abuse in Cairns. It has been a complex issue which frequently receives local media attention. Many of the people known as displaced persons live on or in close surroundings to the Esplanade, and many have been there for a number of years. A lot of those people have come down from their communities and, for various reasons, they have been unable to get back and have made their home on the Esplanade.

The Honourable the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care, Kev Lingard, has taken a direct interest in this issue and has indicated the willingness of his department to fund up to $200,000 to meet the cost of acquiring a suitable building to house displaced persons. He has seen at first-hand the degree of abuse and alcohol-related injury which has been prevalent in the Cairns area as a result of having no appropriate facility to provide help and medical assistance or even proper accommodation for these displaced or homeless people.

The Minister met with the Mayor of Cairns on 29 May this year, and this was followed up by a submission from the Displaced Persons Committee in Cairns, forwarded to the Minister in mid June, proposing the establishment of an overnight crisis accommodation facility to care for homeless or displaced persons. Shortly thereafter, the Cairns City Council wrote to the Honourable the Minister fully supporting the submission. The submission from the Displaced Persons Committee contained a number of objectives which seemed to overlap similar objectives of the Bama Healing Centre, which operates the Diversionary Centre program at the Alluna Hostel in Cairns.

The acting Director of the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs has recently had talks with the Chairman of the Displaced Persons Committee, Mr Kevin Keating, with a view to identifying the relevant roles of both the department and Mr Keating's committee. Obviously, a unified effort is required to resolve the ongoing problem, and it is my information that the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care is in the process of arranging meetings between the department and appropriate people in Cairns to achieve this objective. I will be attending one of its meetings in Cairns on Friday to discuss the formation of the committee. The department must ensure that the issue of displaced persons and the operation of the Diversionary Centre are considered simultaneously.

In relation to the general issue of public substance abuse and drunkenness in Cairns, an application has been submitted by the Far North Queensland Family Resources Service, under the department's Management of Public Intoxication Program, to develop a planned response to the problem. There have been other moves, or initiatives, in the past, some with only limited success. However, I am pleased to say that the Government has made a commitment to assist the people, and it also has the support of the Cairns City Council.

In May last year, the Queensland Police Service appointed a project officer for 12 months to research, develop and implement strategies aimed at minimising the effects of alcohol and other drug abuses in Cairns' homeless and displaced community. However, the project officer's term of appointment ceased on 22 April this year. The Displaced Persons Committee I referred to earlier was established in accordance with the Dillon and Savage reports and the report by the Office of Cabinet. The committee is currently seeking incorporation and funding. It comprises members drawn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community groups.

In another move, the regional health authority has employed two street health workers to liaise with other service providers and operate mobile clinics for the homeless and displaced. In summary, I can advise honourable members that the issue of public drunkenness, although a complex one, is receiving priority attention, and I am confident that the input of the Minister and his department will help alleviate the more visual effects of the problem.

Burnett Shire Council; Rural Fire Service

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton) (7.11 p.m.): I rise to bring to the attention of the House a series of dreadful allegations being made about the conduct of the Burnett Shire Council. These allegations, if true, constitute a totally unacceptable level of impropriety. I believe that in the interests of fairness to the council and the ratepayers concerned an open inquiry should be conducted so that these allegations can be put to rest. However, if they are proven to be correct, clearly some serious intervention from the Minister will be required.

The first allegation is that there has been misuse of ratepayers' funds. I am told that council cars are being used on holidays and that there have been golf trips to Sanctuary Cove, trips to Tasmania and so on. It is said that the bill for these exceeds $100,000. A further allegation is that over $10,000 was squandered on a Christmas party at the Mayor's private residence. This is a venue, it seems, which is well known to the local member, Mr Slack, as he apparently holds fundraisers there. One would have to say that it seems odd to hold a Christmas party 25 kilometres out of Bundaberg. There is an allegation that four council staff were dispatched to clean up around the Mayor's residence before and after the party.

A more serious allegation is that a Councillor Bill Hazenberg gained enormous financial advantage out of the council purchasing land near his property. I am advised that two of the five-person council committee elected to find a suitable parcel of land were not consulted over this purchase and that Councillor Hazenberg actually seconded the motion to buy this land. The mover of the resolution was Councillor John Doyle, who leases the council caravan park in Bargara where this land was bought.

As I understand it, the land required rezoning, and council's decision to do so provoked an appeal by local citizens. It is alleged that this appeal received misleading and incorrect evidence from council staff—again a very serious allegation. It is also said that the judge hearing the appeal made reference to the fact that he was there to hear an appeal about the rezoning of prime industrial land, not to investigate the conduct and ethics of the council, which seems to me a telling point.

Of course, the ratepayers are asking why the council needed to purchase the land in the first place as it already owned two perfectly good premises which were previously the headquarters of the Gooburrum and Woongarra Shires. It seems that Commissioner Hoffman has reported that these two buildings would have served the council well into the year 2000; yet the council, on a split vote, decided to sell off these premises. The council then purchased the Bundaberg Customs House. The Mayor's own son did the property valuations, which does not look too good, either. It seems also that the Burnett Council is very touchy about these allegations, as citizens and journalists have received letters which threaten legal action

whenever criticism is forwarded the council's way.

Of course, it is a fact that the people of the Burnett Shire have called on the Minister to de-amalgamate the shire, but the truth is that the unethical and cronyistic practices being alleged have nothing to do with the de-amalgamation question. These allegations of scurrilous behaviour cannot be allowed to fester. Having brought these allegations to this Parliament, I expect the Minister for Local Government, Mrs McCauley, to take action. I believe the Minister should at least advise the CJC or have another independent body or person conduct a thorough investigation. If these allegations are sustained, then I think there are good grounds for sacking the entire council. Naturally, if these allegations are proved to be without substance, I will stand up in this place and correct the record.

In the two minutes left to me, I want to set the record straight regarding the comments earlier this afternoon by the member for Charters Towers. He referred to rural fire brigades and commented on what he regarded as the paltry amount of money put into rural brigades by the Labor Government. When we came to office, less than $2m per annum was spent on rural fire brigades. They did not have one new appliance. They used to have second-hand urban appliances. The truth is that in the current Budget—the Budget we put together—the Rural Fire Service has a budget of nearly $9m, and it now has over 300 new appliances. I urge the member for Charters Towers to take a lot more care in the advice that he gives to this Parliament and not just read out speeches that are written in the office of the Minister for Primary Industries.

Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park

Ms WARWICK (Barron River) (7.15 p.m.): I wish to inform the House of what I believe to be an important and significant step forward in educating the general public and especially the tourists who visit my electorate about the history, cultures, artistic skills and way of life of Aborigines. I refer to the recent opening of the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park, a $9m complex at Smithfield. This tourism facility was originally situated at Kuranda, but has now relocated down the range to Smithfield.

The park has been designed to showcase a 40,000-year-old culture. The result combines the latest in theatrics and technology with interpretive experiences, with local Aborigines featuring traditional culture and customs. Features include The Magic Space, a museum artspace which acts as a lobby for the twin indoor theatres. This space features authentic Stone Age artefacts once used by the Tjapukai people. It also features large murals painted by the foremost Tjapukai artists retelling the stories of the Dreamtime. In the Creation Theatre, live actors interact with giant holographic and animated images. The story depicts the spiritual and traditional beliefs of the Tjapukai people. The story is told in the Tjapukai language and translated to the audience via personal headsets in seven languages.

The History Theatre presents an historical film covering the past 120 years since the coming of the white man. It retells the effects of modern man's impact on a 40,000-year-old culture. I found this presentation particularly refreshing, especially as it did not gloss over the negative aspects of the actions of the white man. Many people find it very easy to criticise the behaviour of some of our indigenous people, but we must never forget the role we played in helping to destroy that culture. The Dance Theatre is set outdoors in a natural forest amphitheatre and features a live performance celebrating traditional Tjapukai corroborees and songs. The Tjapukai Camp is a traditional tribal encampment where visitors can interact with Tjapukai people, learning how to throw a boomerang, play a didgeridoo and sample bush foods and medicine. The complex also features the Boomerang Restaurant, which has a capacity for seating 250 people and which features international-style cuisine which is influenced by indigenous and native food sources.

The Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park is the largest private employer of Aboriginal people in the whole of Australia. The project employs in excess of 120 staff, of whom 85 per cent are Tjapukai. The benefits of self-determination and cultural pride brought about by such valuable deployment of human resources are felt throughout the entire community.

Under an employment strategy developed to meet the needs of the park, Tjapukai have entered into a benchmark agreement with the Federal Department of Employment, Education and Training. The three-year strategy involves a series of program elements comprising: recruitment to permanent positions in the company in a range of occupations including management, administration, retail, hospitality, performing arts, grounds and maintenance; development of a variety of skills enhancement and career

development programs to meet the identified needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who have been recruited by the company; and cross-cultural awareness training seminars for managers, supervisors and co-workers to create a receptive workplace environment and to influence career advancement and promote harmony and productivity within the workplace.

From its inception, the design and content of the park has been a cooperative and consultative venture between the Tjapukai Tribal Council and elders working with the staff and directors of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre. The Tjapukai Cultural Park is the only authorised presentation of Aboriginal culture in the Tjapukai tribal area. The Tjapukai communities and their elders have approved all the materials presented in the park. There is no other presentation of Aboriginal culture in the area which provides any benefit to the community or which has requested or received the authority to present the Tjapukai culture for profit.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Give credit. Where did the funding come from?

Ms WARWICK: All right. The project was supported by the previous Goss Government and has received ongoing support from our Government. I acknowledge the management skills of Judy and Don Freeman and those of the Aboriginal people, David Hudson in particular. I pay tribute to David Hudson and to the people of the Tjapukai Dance Theatre.

Time expired.

Unemployment; Land Stabilisation

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba) (7.20 p.m.): I thank the honourable member for Barron River for paying tribute to one of the funding initiatives undertaken during my term as Arts Minister. I would like to advise the House of some writings of a Queensland academic, Dr Brian Roberts, who, writing as long ago as 1985, said that ways and means should be found to bring together the alleviation of two of Australia's most pressing problems, namely, unemployment and land stabilisation.

Land degradation is said to have affected 45 per cent of non-arid areas in use in this country and 55 per cent of arid areas in use in this country. I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* a table indicating that there are 1,850,000 square kilometres of degraded land requiring treatment in Australia.

Leave granted.

Form of Degradation	Area	
	'000 sq.km.	Per cent
Non-arid areas		
Area in use	1804	
Area not requiring treatment	987	55
Water erosion	577	32
Wind erosion	57	3
Combined wind and water erosion	55	3
Vegetation degradation	92	5
Dryland salinity	10	<1
Irrigation salinity	9	<1
Other	14	<1
Total area requiring treatment	815	45
Arid areas		
Area in use	3356	
Area not requiring treatment	1506	45
Vegetation degradation and		
little erosion	950	29
some erosion	467	14
substantial erosion	284	8
severe erosion	148	4
dryland salinity	1	<1
Total area requiring treatment	1850	55

Mr WELLS: The worst culprits in the non-arid areas are: water erosion, which accounts for 71 per cent of the damage; vegetation erosion, which accounts for 11 per cent of the damage; wind erosion, which accounts for 7 per cent; another 7 per cent of wind and water erosion combined; and most of the rest of the degraded land is accounted for by salinity. How to address the problem is no mystery. I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* a table from a published article by Dr Brian Roberts.

Leave granted.

Problems and Solutions in Land Care

Problem—Solution

Water erosion—Plant cover, earthworks, land use planning.

Wind erosion—Rough surface, plant cover, land use planning.

Salinity—Tree planting, deep rooted crops.

Soil acidity—Liming of soil, change of crops.

Soil structure breakdown—Reduced tillage, adding organic matter or gypsum.

Soil compaction—Change of tillage methods, ley farming.

Tree dieback—Planting resistant tree species.

Endangered plants—Protected remnants and reserves, special nurseries.

Endangered animals—Special parks and captive colonies, integration of wildlife in land care.

Woody-weed invasion—Fire, herbicides and mechanical control.

Increase in inedible grasses—Rotational grazing, limiting stock numbers.

Mr WELLS: Honourable members will see that what needs to be done is clear. The trouble is that the amount of work involved in the massive planting and earthworks that would be required is immense. Much of this is a public problem, because much of the degradation is on Crown land. However, even where the degradation is on privately owned land, the task is far beyond the capacity of land-holders.

There is, however, a massive labour force available if only we chose to use it. The most recent figures for unemployment in Queensland put it at around 10 per cent. An enormous proportion of those are young people in the vigour of their lives. Direct employment programs have been tried before, but only on a small scale. To solve the problem requires massive employment programs. The work required to solve the problem is largely unskilled, requiring mainly commonsense and muscle. These Queensland's unemployed have in abundance, even if they do not have the skills to get the few available positions going in the job market at the moment. It might be objected that it would not be right to put people on the public payroll to effect a result which would be only for the benefit of private land-holders in rural areas.

I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* another table compiled by the same Queensland academic, which lists a variety of sustainable practices and indicates that most of these would lead to long-term public benefits.

Leave granted.

Land Care

Table 1: Classification of sustainable agriculture practices into private and public benefit over long and short terms

Degradation form	Sustainable practice	Private benefit		Public good	
		ST*	LT	ST	LT
Soil erosion by water and wind	Use of deep ripping, minimum tillage, pasture rotations to restore fragile soils.	✓	✓		✓
	Use of appropriate earthworks to control water flow.		✓		✓
	Retention of cover by stocking adjustment, wildlife management, stubble and roughness retention.		✓		✓
	Use of windbreaks to control wind erosion.	✓	✓		✓
	Improved land capability assessment.		✓		✓
Soil salinity and waterlogging (dryland)	Identification and revegetation of recharge areas.		✓		✓
	Strategic tree and shrub planting/ management.		✓		✓
	Use of deep-rooted perennials wherever possible.		✓		✓
	Farm-plan implementation to preserve trees and shrubs.		✓		✓
Soil salinity and waterlogging (irrigated)	Improved water scheduling.	✓			✓
	Conjunctive re-use of groundwater.			✓	
	Drainage and gypsum to improve infiltration.	✓			
	Improved water distribution networks (infrastructure).		✓		✓
	Site selection consistent with soil and land capability.		✓		✓
Soil structural decline	Minimum tillage.	✓	✓		
	Stubble retention.	✓	✓		
	Use of integration rotation and grazing management for cover and weed control.	✓	✓		
	Matching tillage and stocking to soil type and condition.	✓	✓		
	Use of gypsum on degraded soils	✓	✓		

Degradation form	Sustainable practice	Private benefit		Public good	
		ST*	LT	ST	LT
Soil acidification	Regular lime applications.	✓			
	Use of appropriate fertilisers.	✓			
	Use of deep-rooted perennial pastures where possible.	✓	✓		
Decline in soil nutrients and biological activity	Improved rotations with wider range of alternative crops to control soil pathogens and maintain fertility.		✓		✓
	Adequate testing and choice of appropriate fertilisers/rotations.	✓			
	Management of pastures for maintenance of soil fertility and biological activity.		✓		
Pesticide residues and resistance	Whole-farm integrated pest management.	✓			✓
	biological control of pests.	✓			✓
	Selection of genetically resistant plants and animals.	✓			
	Low pesticide use farming.	✓			
	Biodegradable pesticides.		✓		✓
	Development and use of vaccines.		✓		✓
	Use of rotations to reduce pest/ weed/pathogen burdens.	✓			
Water quality	Improved engineering for effluent disposal and animal housing.				✓
	Provision of adequate health inspection procedures.				✓
	Care in pesticide usage and application methods near open waters.				✓
	Optimise chemical usage to reduce accessions to groundwater.				✓
	Change in fertiliser type and application to improve uptake by plants.	✓			
	Application of fertiliser according to soil analysis.	✓			
	Management to minimise soil erosion and secondary salinity.				✓
Vegetation degradation	Stocking rates consistent with land capability.		✓		✓
	Improved grazing/stock management to gain maximum pasture benefit.	✓			
	Improved management for drought.	✓			
	Utilisation of soil fertility as it builds up.				
	Adequate weed controls and quarantine measures.	✓			✓

*ST = short term benefit; LT = long term benefit.

Mr WELLS: These long-term public benefits, I would suggest, are more than sufficient to justify any incidental benefit that would flow to the land-holders. Of course, the most important public benefit would be the provision of employment opportunities for thousands of young Queenslanders.

Perhaps I should also anticipate the economic rationalist objection that this would reverse the downsizing of the public sector and involve the Government in an intervention in the market which is inappropriate. Anyone inclined to that point of view should read the recent work by the Environmentally Sustainable Development Division of the World Bank. The World Bank now divides capital into four kinds: productive capital, namely, that which is normally measured by economists and included in the national accounts; human capital; social capital; and natural and environmental capital. The kind of program that I am suggesting here would be a

massive investment not only in our natural capital but also in our human capital.

Seniors Business Discount Card

Mrs GAMIN (Burleigh) (7.24 p.m.): The Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care has recently announced a new initiative for senior Queenslanders—the Seniors Business Discount Card—which, I am pleased to say, is already looked on favourably by the seniors community. In June I addressed my local branch of the Association of Independent Retirees and discussed at length this new proposal and the needs of senior citizens.

The coalition understands the point of view of older Queenslanders who have worked very hard all their lives and have made a substantial contribution to society, particularly through the taxes they have contributed for the common good over many, many decades. In the case of the Association of Independent Retirees, their contribution to the community did not end when they retired from the work force and therefore ceased paying wages-related income tax. Many of them worked—and saved—very hard to retire on independent means and not rely on the State for pensions.

It is pretty much universally accepted today that people need to plan and save for their retirements—and for some form of financial safety net during their later years. This is a sensible and creditable initiative. Unfortunately, some of this group who have retired on superannuated incomes have found that fickle economic forces and seesawing interest rates have played havoc with income derived from hard-earned nest eggs. To compound that difficulty, the cost of living has in many instances worked to keep finances tight. That is why associations such as the Association of Independent Retirees have argued very strongly for the extension of concessions to people who have retired on independent means.

Many independent retirees are unable to access concessions through various Federal Government pension schemes because of means testing and asset provisions. It is fair to say that many independent retirees do not need or want income supplements in the form of pensions or part pensions but are seeking access to concessions that would lighten the load in terms of the cost of living.

The Seniors Business Discount Card will now be available to all retired Queenslanders over 60 years of age and will provide access to the discounts scheme currently enjoyed by full Seniors Card holders. This means that an estimated extra 60,000 older Queenslanders will be able to tap into the business discounts scheme. The business discounts program is growing in strength and popularity as more and more businesses recognise the market power of older people and seek to attract their custom and loyalty.

The 1996-97 *Seniors Card Directory* contains a record number of discounts for cardholders, with approximately 300 businesses and 1,000 different outlets offering discounts to seniors listed. The *Seniors Card Directory* is the bible of the business discounts scheme, and some 250,000 have been printed this year for distribution to cardholders up and down the State. Not only is the number of businesses offering discounts important, but also the range of different types of businesses and services offering products relevant to senior citizens.

The scheme covers a diverse range of goods and services as varied as accommodation, travel, clothing and food, and health and fitness items. Access to the business discounts scheme by independent retirees aged over 60 is a significant step forward in addressing the needs of this group. The Department of Families, Youth and Community Care is undertaking, through Seniors Week, a promotional and awareness campaign to let seniors know of this new initiative. Seniors organisations such as the Association of Independent Retirees and the Queensland branch of the Australian Pensioners and Superannuants League, and even local bowls and service clubs, will provide an important source of information on this business discounts initiative.

Like many things, the success of this program and the business discount card depends on the cardholders themselves. The card and the discounts offered are only as good as those prepared to make good use of them. The *Seniors Card Directory* is issued to all cardholders as a comprehensive companion guide to businesses in their region. This will assist people to get the best possible use out of their cards and the scheme.

I am looking forward to further announcements from the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care in relation to extensions to the Seniors Card. New initiatives for the Seniors Card program, including greater accessibility for a larger number of seniors, will have a significant impact in the Gold Coast region, which has a high proportion of independent retirees.

Vickery Mine, New South Wales

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba) (7.29 p.m.): I take this opportunity for the House to show its disgust at CRA for its arrest today of workers at the Vickery mine in northern New South Wales. CRA has locked out its workers for nine months in northern New South Wales, not allowing them to go to work. It refuses to negotiate with the workers there and wants to introduce a 12-hour day. That sort of attitude from CRA goes back to the Dark Ages, when people were put into mines with no lights or safety. CRA should talk to its workers. Putting workers into mines to dig out coal for 12 hours a day——

Mr Hobbs: You wouldn't know about the workers.

Mr PURCELL: The member would not work in an iron lung with someone breathing for him. He has never worked in his life. He is a silvertail!

It is the belief of some members of this House that the Vickery mine had one of the most multiskilled work forces and was one of the safest mines in New South Wales until CRA management took over.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 7.30 p.m.